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Rightly Instructed

In God's Holy Word

"The Truth as this Church hath received the same"

By
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PREFACE

ABOVE all the courses of instruction with which I am acquainted, the "Beckwith System," as it may be called, seems to me to rest upon the only true principle and method. The principle is that it is neither right nor expedient to substitute any other for the Church's own rearing and training of her children, the plain directions for which are laid down in her "Book of Common Prayer."

This little volume develops not only the letter, but the spirit of the Church's system and method of instruction.

Christianity is a *life* and should be dealt with as such. The natural life is God's outward sign or sacrament to us of the Spiritual. All human relationships are transient types of our abiding relationships with Him and with one another in Him. All fatherhood or brotherhood will be swallowed up in the divine realities of which they are but shadows. In the natural life the child awakes to find himself in certain natural relationships which are to him

simply *facts* of experience. He does not doubt those facts; the manner in which, on the contrary, he realizes them, and all that belongs to them, determines and constitutes all his subsequent personal life and character. To enter into the meaning, to recognize the obligations, to discharge the duties, to enjoy the privileges and pleasures, of all one's natural relations is the sum of the natural life.

All rights, duties, virtues and goods, consist in the realizing of natural relations.

So it is with any other personal life and mostly so with the highest. The first aim of the Church as a mother is to bring her children to a realization of the Divine Fatherhood as a simple matter of fact. One in whom this principle was strong, expressed it in this way: "I would rather my children doubt or deny my own fatherhood than that of God."

The Church realizes that all spiritual and divine life and character flow as solely and surely out of the realization of this divine relation as the natural life does out of fulfilled natural relations. To us, once for all, the Divine Fatherhood has manifested itself in the human sonship of Jesus Christ. As it has been fulfilled *for* us, so can it be fulfilled *in* us,—only in Him. God has given us life,—His own divine, eternal life,—and this life is

in His Son. Only in Him, and as He is in us, can we have life. That we are in Him is an act of God; that He is in us depends upon ourselves. But our own becoming sons through faith is only a realization or appropriation of God's previous making us sons through grace. The truth of baptism, which is a truth of grace, God's part, precedes the act of faith, which is our part, and which is simple acceptance of the grace. As Luther said, Christianity is a realizing of our baptism,—an acceptance or appropriation or actualizing of the *fact* that God has made us sons in Christ Jesus. Faith or conversion does not make us sons, it is simply realizing that we *are* sons, that God has made us so,—of which baptism is the sacrament.

Now the Church in the "Book of Common Prayer" teaches her children that God has done His part; that they are just as much His children by grace in Christ as they are the children of their parents through their natural birth. Just as their natural behavior and conduct and character and life spring out of their undoubting acceptance of relations which they did not create, so she expects their Spiritual life to flow out of Spiritual relations that already exist and are as real as the natural ones. So the Church does not teach us that we must,

by faith, make ourselves children of God, but that we must by faith *be*, what He has made us, children of God.

This natural, rational, and practical method of bringing up in Christ, or in the Church which is His body, needs to be restored, and this system of instruction is doing much to restore it. It is quite possible in the youngest to make spiritual relations as much a matter of fact, and spiritual life as much a reality, as natural relations and life are. That they are not so is not the fault of our children. Our Lord would not have said that "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," if the dispositions which constitute the kingdom of heaven were impossible in them. The difficulty is that we do not truly present to our children the objective facts of the kingdom of heaven upon which the subjective dispositions rest. If we made it more spiritually plain and clear to them that they *are* children of God, they would more spiritually and truly *be* children of God. Because we *are* sons, and through our realization that we are, God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

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Rightly Instructed

In God's Holy Word

INTRODUCTION

WE propose a study of the Church's teaching, and an explanation of her authoritative voice touching the personal life of her members, as set forth in the Church Catechism. Our purpose shall have been accomplished when we have declared the "truth as this Church hath received the same," and the teaching for which the Church is responsible.

This task is the more readily undertaken by us because experience has forced upon us the conclusion that of all the institutions on the earth, the Church of God is the most misunderstood, the most misrepresented, and the most misjudged. If the Church were what, in the popular mind, she is supposed to be; or taught what, in the popular mind, she is supposed to

teach; the Church would not deserve to survive a day's sun. We have heard teachings attributed to the Church of which she has never dreamed; neglects in pious living charged to her door against which she has openly contended; and practices which she has never countenanced are pointed to as the direct outcome of her discipline and worship.

The Church is supposed to be lifeless because formal in her methods, and careless of personal Christianity because systematic in her instruction. Those who should know what the Church does teach, because themselves are public teachers, have been loose in their statements, until very commonly the Church is regarded as nothing more than a social institution, caring little for the personal lives of her members, provided they are well attired and appear in proper form before their fellow men.

Such misjudgment of the Church is without semblance of excuse. The bodies of Christian people about us may, by chance, or accident, be misunderstood and misrepresented, and that without bad intention and even in spite of strenuous effort to the contrary. We ourself have made earnest endeavor to understand the platform, so to speak, of these bodies and to be made acquainted with the teaching for which each is responsible. This we have

found no easy task, from the fact that, with rare exception, each of these bodies has placed itself in the hands of individual preachers, without other guide than the peculiar bend of their own individual mind.

Not so the Church.

She has written herself down, and any one may read what she has written. The Church has not intrusted herself to her pulpit. She has her formularies, which are few and short, and to these her clergy as well as her people, are amenable. Every clergyman at his ordination takes a solemn vow to "teach the truth as this Church hath received the same" and should he err therefrom, his hearers in the pew may present him to the bishop for trial on the charge of "false teaching." Church standard is not in the preacher, and hence anybody and everybody may know just what the Church does teach and for what the Church is responsible.

As a teacher, the office of a clergyman of the Church is to proclaim what he himself has been taught, and to explain what he has been commissioned to teach. A clergyman of the Church may say, "I think thus and so," but his thinking will carry no more weight than his personal opinion is worth. When a clergyman speaks authoritatively and says, "thus

saith the Church," he must be able to place his hand on the writing and show where the Church so teaches. If one does not agree with the Church's system, we may have patience and wait until a better day comes and a wiser judgment is formed. But surely it is not too much to ask, as a matter of common honesty, that those who speak against the Church shall at least examine her formularies and certify themselves that what they condemn as "Church teaching" is for truth the teaching of the Church, and not merely a reflex of their own misshapened fancies. It cannot be considered just to misrepresent first and then, on the ground of this misrepresentation, to condemn the Church so misrepresented; and yet this is exactly what is done with a woeful frequency.

Having had much experience with this wholesale condemnation of the Church, and having moved much among those who, under such teaching, know the Church only to be prejudiced against her, we have undertaken to set forth in plain language and figure the teaching which the Church has written in her authorized "Book of Instruction" and for which alone she is responsible.

We ask the reader to follow us through to the end. We shall endeavor to deal with

every subject candidly and fairly, and when we are done you shall judge for yourself as to the purity, the strictness and the reasonableness of the Church's instruction; and with the Holy Scripture in hand, you shall be the further judge as to whether or not the Church has been a faithful witness to the truth as contained in God's Holy Word.

We shall not propose an apology for anything which the Church may teach: she is of age and shall answer for herself. We shall endeavor to answer the question: "For what teaching is the Church responsible?" The answer to this question shall be sought in the Church's Catechism. (See "Book of Common Prayer," p. 266.)

The Catechism is defined as, "An instruction to be learned by every person before he be brought to be confirmed by the bishop." Confirmation admits us to the holy communion, which is the Church's highest devotional service. Hence we cannot be wrong in concluding that, within the questions and answers of the Catechism, is contained all the instruction the Church has deemed necessary for her children to receive in order that they may "do their duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them."

A step further we may go in emphasizing

the importance and completeness of the authority to which we now appeal in determining the Church's responsibility as a teacher: The Catechism is the only systematic instruction set forth by the Church. The "Book of Common Prayer" continues in worship what the Catechism teaches; or, to reverse it, for the sake of historic accuracy, the Catechism teaches what the Church has set forth in worship in her "Book of Common Prayer." Hence again, there is no excuse for ignorance as to what the Church does teach or for what the Church is responsible, especially on the part of those who proclaim themselves instructors in religious matters.

In the study before us we do not propose to examine each question and answer in the Church Catechism. Our object is to present the teaching of the Catechism as a whole, thus laying the foundation for the future study of those who feel an interest in the Church and her welfare.

Chapter I

GOD'S RELATIONSHIP TO US AND OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD ARE STATED

The Church Catechism,—first four questions
(See "Book of Common Prayer," p. 266)

THE first division of the Catechism includes the opening questions and answers down to the Apostles' Creed, and this deals with the fact of relationship.

Let it be borne in mind that the Church claims to be a divine institution:—God's Church. Let it be further remembered that this Catechism is the Church's instruction in time for life in eternity. And yet the Church begins such an instruction with the question:

"What is your name?"

One would call this trifling. What has the Church to do with my name? The Church should teach Christ and Christianity. Why does the Church not begin with the Bible in hand and require her children to commit to memory this and that portion of the sacred record:—the Sermon on the Mount, for instance? What possible connection can my name have with my Christian life? What

difference can it make to the Church as a teacher, or, to me, as a Christian man, what my name may be, or, if I have no name? So have men questioned, and like Pilate asking the Master, "What is truth?" they have turned away before the answer could be made.

He is not wise who dismisses, without consideration, any matter that may be important, and the Church is too old an institution to be guilty of childish folly. There is a singular emphasis given in Holy Scripture to the name:

> God named Adam, and changed
> Abram's name to Abraham;
> Sarai's to Sarah;
> Jacob's to Israel;
> Osea's to Joshua.

The forerunner of Christ was "named" John. Of the Master the angel said, "Thou shalt call His name, Jesus."

Many like instances will occur to your mind in the New as well as in the Old Testament. The Scripture emphasizes the beginning of each new dispensation by a change of name. So, possibly, the Church may have some reason worthy your consideration for thus opening her book of Christian instruction with the question: "What is your name?"

But there is another and more common line

of thought that may give point and meaning to the Church's method of teaching, and reveal a deeper wisdom in that which from the unthinking has only provoked a smile. Suppose, upon the street, in the night and darkness, you should chance upon a little child, crying; what would be *your* first question? How natural to ask: "My little child, what is your name?" and in asking the child's name, what are you determining, if not the child's *relationship* and the child's home? The child is lost and the name will declare the father and the home. If the child is without a name, your effort to lead the lost one back to his home will be hopeless.

This is just what the Church means when she asks each of us:

"My child, what is your name?"

The Church is determining and teaching the child's relationship. We all, like sheep, have wandered and strayed away, and are lost in the wilderness of sin and the world. The Church seeks to find us and lead us back to our Heavenly Father and our home, and these two are involved in the Christian name we bear. For this reason we are asked, "What is your name?" We are thus met, at the very outset of our Christian instruction, with the tremendous *fact* of our relationship to God.

We must pause here for a further considera-

tion of this matter. There may be such a being as God, and such a place or condition as heaven; there may be such a being as man, and such a place as earth, but neither can have any interest in the other unless a *relationship* between the two exists. There are earthly crowns of earthly kingdoms, but to wear these crowns kings are born. Histories of the English kingdom are within our reach, and we may master English jurisprudence and the laws of the English government, but no amount of learning, nor depth of longing, nor earnestness of desire, can bring you or me to the English throne. That is a matter of inheritance, and to the crown head we are not *related.* The question of the wise men when following the leading of the star, was perfectly natural: "Where is He that is *born* king of the Jews?"

A step further will emphasize this. There is not a thought: there is not a fact: there is not a life that is not "related" to some other thought, fact or life. This hath God done. The seed to the plant: the sand to the rock: the parent to the child: the neighbor to his friend: the citizen to his country. Nothing stands alone. No life is isolated. All things are related, the one to the other. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dies to himself." Duty: responsibility: privilege:—these are

tremendous issues, and yet each is dependent upon the relationship we bear. Life is not a question of feeling or sentiment merely, nor are the emotions the highest incentives to action. Life is a probation and its issue is along the line of duty done, or, duty undone. We either do, or we do not owe a duty to God and to our fellow man, and duty hinges on the relationships of life.

Relationships are of two kinds; first, such as are natural and ordered, as sonship and citizenship; and second, such as are assumed, as the marriage state. The one is imposed upon us; the other, we impose upon ourselves. From the obligation of neither can we escape. The moment a relationship is established the duty consequent upon that relationship, demands a hearing. Are you husband or wife: son or daughter: brother or sister: citizen or neighbor? Then you have a life to live and a duty to perform in each of these relationships, and neither neglect nor excuse can rid you of the obligation or ward off the responsibility. Not until the relationship is destroyed, can the voice of duty be silenced.

Where there is no relationship, there is no duty. Where there is no relationship, there is no responsibility. Where there is no relationship, there is no privilege, and no hope of re-

ward. These things are true in this world, because they are true in the world to come. You may desire the crown of nobility, but so long as that crown is a question of *birth*, your desire will be in vain, and your effort to obtain will be fruitless, if the proper relationship does not make you akin to the royal family. You may desire to wear the crown of peace hereafter, but unless it is yours by inheritance, you can never obtain it. You must be akin to the king, if you would wear the king's signet.

Hence it becomes a question of momentous concern, and our first interest should be to answer it: Has God established any relationship between Himself and man? If not, then God may exist and heaven, and yet all the longings of the human heart could not please the One or inherit the other. If there is no relationship between us and God, knowledge of the Scripture would no more help us towards attaining the Eternal Crown, than, without proper family connection, will knowledge of the English government lead us to wear the English crown. Unrelated to God and heaven, we would simply have no part nor lot in the matter. But if God has established a relationship between man and Himself, we become heirs by promise, and the relationship which declares our privileges in the world to

come determines our duty in the world that now is.

"When ye pray," said the Master, "say, Our Father." "Our Father,"—why, that marks the relationship of family life: parent to child, and child to parent, and the child bears the parent's *name.* The name points to the parent. The *relationship* involves the name. The first question in Christian instruction, as the first question in anything that deals with man's responsibility, must be based upon our relationship, and therefore, the Church opens her instruction with the question:

"What is your name?"

The family life has, since its first institution, been God's sermon to the world. The type of heavenly things in the human relationship of father to child: "Now are ye the sons of God."

This is the picture, the symbol. What is found to be the essential condition of the earthly home, will have its bearing on the heavenly. The earthly family is the shadow of God's family, the Church; and the life and the duty of the child in the one will typify the life and the duty of the child in the other. Christianity is neither an abnormal experience, nor an unnatural condition. It is the home-life of a child in his Heavenly Father's family.

"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

If we suffer our little ones to be reared strangers to the Church and the Church's ways, they grow up out of the natural course of childhood, and when they are grown they will have all their youthful lessons to learn anew. This fact is equally true in the earthly home-life. Hence the abnormal experience of many people in coming into the Church. The lessons of their childhood have been neglected and these must form the chief interest at a time when the practical life of advanced manhood should be engaging them. I have seen the youth of eighteen years on entering school, classed with a child not yet in his "teens": such an experience is always embarrassing because it is abnormal. The blame should not, however, attach to the school. St. Paul has a line in this connection: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles (Heb. 6 : 1, 2), of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5 : 12).

When the body has been neglected and disease has, through this neglect, taken hold of the physical organism, a decided treatment is necessary before health is regained: a treat-

ment of which the same body in healthy development knows nothing. Neglect the spiritual side of our nature, and spiritual sickness results. Treatment analogous to that through which the sick and diseased body must pass in returning to health will be the necessary spiritual experience.

The Church, following closely upon the warning and instruction of Holy Scripture, has made this thought the foundation of her teaching: "Bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Bring up your child properly in his Heavenly Father's household, and his Christian life will be as natural and his Christian experience as normal as, under the same conditions, will be the every-day life and experience of the same child in his earthly home, and for the same reason. Where the child has been properly brought up in the Church and taught to love and reverence holy things and respect his Heavenly Father's will, his life in the Church will be a "continuance in well-doing."

This is the *ordinary* child-life, wherever the child may be. The earthly family foreshadowing the heavenly: the earthly father, God's type of Himself, in the relationship which He has established between Himself and us, and

made known in His own blessed words: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me: when ye pray, say, Our Father."

The parent who neglects the home-training of his child casts a shadow across his young life, and changes into mystery what God has written on the open page of an open book.

The parent who neglects the Church-training of his child has caused one of God's little ones to be offended, and the millstones of sorrow that come too late are heavy and the sea hath no bottom.

Thus hath childhood's mind been rendered dull, and the arms of the true Father have been thrust aside in blind heartlessness. Children err and know it not, for parents do not think.

But how is the earthly family established? What is it that makes the relationship of father to son possible? Is it not true that birth is the condition of entrance into this world, and therefore, the condition of sonship? Thus did the Master, in revealing heavenly things, appeal to the earthly: "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Ye must be born again." "Born of water and of the spirit." Baptism is our birth into God's family, the Church; and hence the second question of the Catechism: "Who gave

you this name?" and the answer, "My sponsors in baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

Baptism is to the Church what physical birth is to the earthly family. By physical birth, we are made children of our earthly family: by baptism, we are made children of the Church. Hence we have two names: the one from our physical birth, and the other from our baptism. The one declaring our earthly relationship; the other, declaring our heavenly relationship: each relationship determined by the answer to the question:

"What is your name?"

And as we cannot be born more than once, so can we not be baptized more than once. And as physical birth makes us, for all time, the child of our earthly father, so baptism makes us, for all time, the child of our heavenly Father. Man may expel from human societies but not from the Church of God. Man cannot undo or nullify God's institution. You cannot unborn a child, and you cannot unbaptize a child. Once a child, then a child forever. If I am ever hung, it will be my father's child that is hung: if I am lost, it will be God's child that is lost. What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Now let us examine the type again. Birth makes me my earthly father's child: what *kind* of a child? Obedient or disobedient? Loving or unloving? Old or young? Pretty or ugly? Why, these are *qualities*, and have nothing whatever to do with the *fact* of birth. A sick child is just as truly a child as one in health. Even death does not destroy the relationship: he is my dead child. Birth is a fact, and has nothing to do with *quality*.

Baptism is our spiritual birth. Through baptism, which is God's institution, we are adopted into God's family, and become God's children. In baptism, the *fact* of childhood is established, and that fact has no more to do with a moral *quality* than physical birth has to do with the physical *condition* of the child.

Of course it is understood that we follow this Scriptural teaching and deal with *childhood*. When the duties of childhood are neglected and delayed until age has advanced and the child has become the man, qualifying conditions are added. The child has become the man, that is all, and the act of baptism must add to the fact of childhood the discretionary qualities of the child grown old. Through parental neglect, that which should have been done in childhood, has been delayed. The child has become the man, and because he is

no longer a child, but a man, therefore he must bring to this service, as to any other, the qualities that belong to his manhood. There must be, in the case of the man, mental and moral preparation for baptism, simply because the man is old enough to think for himself. The thought finds its perfect counterpart in the natural and every-day life. Children are born and become members of our earthly family in infancy: and yet who has not known of children being adopted into and therefore becoming members of earthly families after they have ceased to be children in age? The child who in infancy enters a home, enters it unconditionally: the same child adopted into the same home, after he has reached years of discretion must submit to the conditions of proper behavior; he must promise to respect the principles of government which control the home he is about to enter, because he is now old enough to make this promise for himself. Herein is the plain figure of "Adult Baptism." The difference between baptism in infancy and baptism in advanced years is in the subject *for* baptism and not in the fact *of* baptism. In infant baptism, the godparents promise for the child: in adult baptism, the person promises for himself. The service is the same in each case, and the result of that service is the same.

As institutions of God, neither physical birth nor Christian baptism deals with *qualities:* the subject is supposed to be a child.

Physical birth is a change of state and condition whereby the child is placed where he *may*, not must, grow to manhood,—for children neglected die.

Spiritual birth, or baptism, is a change of state and condition whereby one is placed where he *may*, not must, become a full-grown man in Christ Jesus. This is plainly set forth in a question and answer towards the close of the Catechism:

> "Ques. What is the inward and spiritual grace in baptism?"
>
> "Ans. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace."

By His own institution God establishes the *fact*, and in holy baptism makes us His children. Our manner of life determines the *kind* of children we make ourselves. Whether we become good or bad children depends, not on the fact of our birth, *but on the way we live.*

The relationship is one thing, and the establishment of that relationship is a fact.

The duty consequent upon the relationship is another thing, and the condition of its fulfilment is a result and therefore contingent.

Having been made God's children in holy baptism, it should be the business of our lives to be the very best children we can: to live as God's children, in order that we may finally inherit our Father's blessing.

The first and second questions of the Catechism point out the *relationship* we bear to God: the third and fourth questions lead up to the *character of life* we should build upon the fact of our sonship. In baptism your sponsors promised that you would renounce what was wrong; believe in God, and keep His Commandments: "Dost thou not think that thou art *bound* to believe and to do as they promised for thee?"

There is but one rational answer, and the Church has made it: "Yes, verily, and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."

Chapter II

THE DUTIES CONSEQUENT UPON OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD ARE STATED

(1) Our Faith

"Whosoever cometh to God must first believe that He is."
The Church Catechism: Creed and questions thereon
(The "Book of Common Prayer," p. 267)

WE were studying the teaching for which the Church is responsible and we have chosen the Catechism for our text-book, not only because it contains the teaching by which the Church must stand and be judged, but chiefly because the Catechism is the only book of systematic instruction the Church has provided for the preparation of her children for the fulfilment of the duties of their Christian life. The "Book of Common Prayer" is a book of devotion, consistent on every page with the teaching contained in the Catechism. If you wish to know for what teaching the Church is responsible, as touching the personal life of her members, the catechism will answer the question.

In the preceding chapter we have treated

the first division of the Catechism, down to the Creed. If we have been fortunate, we have left clearly impressed on your minds the fact that God has established a certain *relationship* between Himself and man. God is our Father and we are His children. The earthly home-life is the figure God has chosen as the type of His Church. Just as we become members of our earthly family by physical birth, so do we become members of God's family, the Church, by holy baptism. By God's own institution man is brought into covenanted relationship with Him: we are adopted into His household, and become His children: "When ye pray, say, Our Father."

When we consider that, unrelated to God, the human race is cut off from the hope of a future blessedness, the thought that has engaged us receives its proper emphasis. The duties, responsibilities and privileges of life are measured not by what we feel, or think, but are dependent upon the *relationship* we bear.

It should be plain that a relationship with God can be established only by God's own institution. God ordained physical birth as the means through which man should become related to man. God ordained holy baptism as the means through which man might be-

come related to God. Herein does baptism find its Scriptural definition; it is our "new birth." Had the clear teaching of the Scripture on this subject been received in its simplicity, the fitness of infant baptism could never have disturbed the Christian mind. Children do not wait until they are old enough to choose where they will live; who shall be their parents; under what form of government they will enlist, and then after all these matters have been submitted to the child, and by the child have been settled, physical birth takes place. Children are born as infants.

Let it not be forgotten that the Master has chosen this very physical birth as a figure of our spiritual birth, through which, in holy baptism, we become children of our Heavenly Father. Physical birth is a change of physical condition and relationship by which a child is placed where he may physically develop. Baptism is a change of spiritual condition and relationship by which the child is placed where he may spiritually develop.

The clearest example of this change of relationship known to us occurs in the Old Testament. You will remember that God's own peculiar people were in bondage in Egypt. Under the blessing of God, these servants of Pharaoh increased in number until the fear

was expressed that a time might come when, in revolt, the servants would become the masters. Under this fear, Pharaoh passed a law that every male child born to the Israelites should be slain. It was at this time, and under these conditions that Moses was born. By one of those simple motherly intuitions, the fact of this child's birth was concealed. Weeks passed into months, and the child grew stronger until his cries stole out, like forbidden sweets, through the cracks of the door and the openings of the windows. Further concealment was not possible, and other methods for preservation must be resorted to. A wicker basket is made and the child is entrusted to the waters. It is not difficult to imagine the frantic bitterness of this despairing mother who, having done all to be spared man's cruelty, now trusts the wicker basket and the merciless waters. Remember, this child is in a state and condition of condemnation. The sentence of death was passed upon him at his birth. Pharaoh had said, "This child must die." He is, therefore, a child of condemnation.

By one of those strange accidents which some account Providence, Pharaoh's daughter comes to the water's edge seeking her bath. She is attracted by the infant's voice to the

wicker basket, and bids her maid to fetch the child. Just then, Miriam, who had been set to watch, comes forward with the request, "Let me bring a nurse for the child." Pharaoh's daughter holds the little Hebrew in her arms for a moment, and then hands him back to his natural mother, with the injunction, "Take care of this child for me."

Now, let it be noted: no change has come over the child. He is in every respect the same child. His dress is the same: his cry is the same. And yet, what a tremendous change! A moment ago he was a child under condemnation; a moment ago he was to be slain by the king's orders: and now, he is the welcome guest in the king's own palace! The very law, that a moment ago would have slain, is the law that now protects. The child's state and condition have changed. The child, Moses, has been adopted into Pharaoh's family, and has become a member of Pharaoh's household. Moses is henceforth the king's son, and a rightful heir to the throne. There is no moral change: there is no physical change: there is no mental change. In all these respects the child is the same. The change is in the child's state and condition. A new relationship has been established. The child, hunted by death, has become the son of the king.

Such is the figure of holy baptism. We are born children of wrath. In Adam the human race transgressed God's law and came under the law of sin, which is death, and so the sentence of death must pass upon all. We were born under condemnation, as was Moses; he to the law of man; we to the law of God. We were brought to the Church and held, for a moment, in the arms of God's minister. We were consecrated to God, and through God's institution, we were adopted into God's family. We were born of water and the spirit, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and then we were returned to the arms of our natural mother with the injunction, "Take care of this child for the King." Baptism is our entrance into God's family, the Church, just as physical birth is our entrance into our earthly father's family. Through baptism we become God's children: not good or bad, but children. The way we behave settles the moral question and determines the kind of children we permit ourselves to be. With this thought clear in our minds, we may follow its first consequence.

Out of the relationship of father to son, certain duties arise: Let us inquire into them.

Returning to the ordinary home-life, What is the child's first duty? The infant lies in its

mother's arms and rests. Its eyes look into its mother's and a stranger can read trust and confidence, even before the tongue can utter articulate words. A smile quivers upon the pliable lips; a strange light darts from the soul's windows, speaking in language which belongs to the life from whence the little soul has ventured: "I trust my mother." What are these, if not the child's faith? Faith in what the child can neither understand nor comprehend; faith in what the child cannot explain; faith resulting from the *fact* that he is a child. He were an unnatural child who, even in his infancy, did not know his mother and trust the strong arm of his father. The natural law of brute beasts, governed by instinct alone, bids the child to trust the arm that holds it.

Faith being the first duty a child owes in the earthly home, which home God has chosen as the figure of His Church, you will not be surprised to find the creed, which is the statement of the Christian faith, placed in the Church Catechism, as the first duty which God's children owe to Him, their Heavenly Father. To believe in God is man's first duty to God, simply because God is our Father. "Whosoever cometh to God, must first believe that He is."

But what is faith? Volumes have been written to answer that question, and volumes, we are bold to think, have mystified a very simple answer. Let it be noted:

> The Faith is one thing;
> Our faith is quite another thing.
> The Faith of Christianity is one thing;
> Our faith in Christ is another thing.

The commingling of these two distinct ideas is responsible for much of the confused thought in the popular mind to-day. The faith, as set forth in the Apostles' Creed, is a statement of those things which God has revealed, and hence the Creed bears a relationship to that system known as Christianity.

But a creed is not peculiar to Christianity. It is rather remarkable that men have passed over this thought, accepting without question dogmatic truth in every other department of life and stumbling only when they reach the teachings of our Lord, and stumbling, forsooth, because they have met a creed!

There is not a system in the world, whether in theory or practice, that has not its creed. Medicine has its creed: law has its creed, civil engineering has its creed; and the practice of these systems is possible only on the basis of their creed. Will you pause long enough to

test this thought? How is it that the physician cuts the arm, missing the artery when you and I would sever it? The physician knows where the artery is. An article of the physician's creed tells him that the artery is here and not there. That artery is found in the same place, says his creed, in every man's arm. If this were not so, and if this were not taught to be so, the practice of medicine would not be possible. A creedless surgeon would, indeed, be a fit partner for the undertaker.

In the darkness of the night, unguided by star, the mariner with eye fixed on his compass, steers the ship unerringly upon its course, and reaches through wind and storm, the haven where he would be. An article of his creed tells him whither the needle points. Error is in neglecting the needle.

Christianity, too, as a system, is based upon the statements of certain revealed truths. This statement is found in what is commonly known as the Christian Creed. That which is contained in the Creed is not true because it is in the Creed, but it is in the Creed because it is true. The Creed is a statement of revealed truth.

And here it is well to have clearly in our minds the distinction between a revelation and a discovery. Man has never yet created a

truth. Truth is eternal. Man, through searching, discovers a truth that was covered. The process through the ages has been simple but slow. Beginning with dead matter, man has studied the law of mineral formation, patiently following the lead until a certain point is reached beyond which he cannot go. He then comes in contact with life: matter moves. No man can span this chasm. He must begin at the bottom again and study life from its simplest form upward. Again he reaches a point beyond which he cannot go. Living matter becomes matter that thinks, and at the bottom must the study again be begun,—for the connecting link between animal life and the thinking mind cannot be traced. Rising in the scale of mind-study, man comes in contact with spirit. The same chasm is met in every branch of investigation, and in every branch the beginning of study must be at the bottom. The limit of discovery is brief.

That which man is not able to discover, God has revealed. Discovery is truth climbed up to. Revelation is truth let down. The proof of discovery is a mental process; the proof of revelation is that God has said so. The truths contained in the Christian Creed are truths revealed.

The Creed is a statement of facts pertaining

to the nature of God, and therefore of facts external to man: facts which do not depend for their truth upon man's acceptance. The faith was formulated before we were born, and will remain after we have turned to dust. That which is true is true because it is true, and it will remain true though every man, woman and child, deny its truth. The Creed is a statement of facts which are independent of us, and therefore the facts of the Creed are not affected by our denial. Will you test the thought? A light burns on your table: do you deny it? Well, suppose the light is burning, how can your denial affect the light? If it burns, the light is external to you and therefore is independent of you: how can your denial effect its burning? This is the reason the Scripture has written,—"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Who, but a foolish one, could hope to wipe out Infinity with a finite breath!

The faith of Christianity is not a deduction; it is not an after thought; it is not a development. The Creed is a statement of God's revealed truth, external to and independent of man's acceptance. Revelation once closed, the faith becomes complete and full, never to be added to: never to be changed by man's intervention.

Such is the Creed of Christianity. This is The Faith.

Now as to whether we have faith in the truths which God has revealed and which are stated in the Christian Creed, is to raise a question which has to do with *ourselves*, and hence presents a thought very different from that which a moment ago engaged us. We were then speaking of *the faith* which is independent of us: we now speak of *our* faith which involves us.

Laying aside, then, the consideration of The Faith, let us ask, what is our faith? How may I know I have faith in God? How may my faith be tested and proven?

Whatever our faith may be, and wherever located, whether in the mental, emotional, or practical side of our nature, we can have but *one* faith, be it faculty or what not. Our faith in man and our faith in God is one and the same faith. The object changes; the faith is the same.

If that subtle thing which binds us to our fellow man in trust, escapes the pigeon-hole and defies analysis, we need not be surprised to find the same faith which binds us to God to be as subtle. What do we expect of our faith? That it should be green, or gray, that the eye may detect it? Shall it be square or

round by the carpenter's tool? Shall it have weight for the grocer's scales? Shall the acids of the chemist declare its presence, or the shrewd word-dealer discover it? Our faith in man declines to answer any and all such calls. What is there peculiar in the same faith, stretching out its empty hands towards the living God, that should make candles of such human manufacture discover it? It is a vain search, and so men doubt whose faith, if exercised, would move a life. What has faith to do with sentiment or emotion or feeling? These come and go, rise and fall, with the physical condition. Can our faith be dependent upon our bodily health?

Is our faith to be measured by knowledge; by our understanding? Then what do we know? What one thing on the earth, in the sky above, or in the water underneath, do we understand? We believe that bread nourishes the body: does any man understand how? Why should bread and not sand, nourish the body? We believe that corn planted will grow: can any man explain its growth? Why does corn grow and not the pebble? "Germ life," do you say? Then what do we know of germ life? Why does one germ become an elephant, and another, the difference at the start not being perceptible, become a turnip,

and another a human creature, made in the image of God? What do we know of "germ life"?

Can our faith be dependent upon our knowledge, or our understanding when there is not one single thing we either know or understand, unless self-consciousness be counted?

Life, the fact of living, and the phenomena therewith connected, are among the most common experiences we meet. What do we know of life? A body moves and we say the body lives,—that is all we know of life. A body lies still, and goes to decay, and we say the body is dead,—that is all we know of death. The physician may use heavy sounding words and tiresome sentences, but when it is all reduced to its simplest form we recognize life in its manifestation, and we recognize death in its stillness and decay. If our faith in God is dependent upon our understanding, what means the Scripture: "Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"?

Let us come to the real question. What is the test of faith in the ordinary affairs of every-day life? How do you and I prove our faith in our fellow man? If a clear answer can be given to this question, we will not be

far from the like clear answer to the question regarding our faith in God, for the faith is the same in each case. One eats bread and believes it will nourish the body: the proof that he so believes is not his understanding of the process, but the fact that he *eats*. One plants corn believing that it will grow. That which proves that he so believes is the fact that he *plants* it. My friend promises that at a certain hour he will meet me at a certain place; the proof that I believe my friend is the fact that I *go to meet him* at the appointed hour and place. Our faith in the ordinary affairs of life submits to one test and one test only, and that the test of action. What a man has faith in, he acts on. Faith necessitates action. Action is the proof of faith as action is the test of faith. Where there is no action there is no faith. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Knowledge may be lacking and blindness may sweep across the understanding; sorrow may chill the emotions and bitterness of disappointed hope may deaden sentiment; the strange visitation of God's providence may bow the soul into the very dust, and still the voice of faith ring out with the clearness of a clarion tone, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

I once heard the story of a father who took pride in showing his friend what he was pleased to regard a sign of intelligence on the part of his tottling child. Concealing himself in the darkness of an uncovered cellar, he would have his little one brought near enough to be attracted by his call, and then from the hidden darkness, he would utter the child's name,—"Leap, my child, I will catch you." The father's voice was the only guide, but into the darkness the little form would disappear, to be lovingly caressed in the strong arms that were tenderly outstretched, though not seen. No sterner test of faith than this. The child did not stop to question or understand. The child could not have understood had he tried. His father's voice had called him and that was enough. To question was to doubt. To believe was to obey. To the child the act was so simple, and yet this is faith so deep. "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And He putteth forth His own sheep and He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice."

Do you believe in God? Your manner of life will test it; your manner of living will prove it. Not your knowledge, and not your feelings. Faith is tested by action, and your

daily life will test and prove your faith in God as in your fellow man. If you have faith in God, that faith will influence your manner of living. "If we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." Rather strong language this, and yet it is the witness of an inspired writer. Say what you will of the Christian character: it has but one explanation,—it stands for a man's faith in the living God. The character is possible only as an expression of faith, and character is action grown into form. Life's purest gem is action crystallized into character. The devils believe and tremble. Faith hath no place in hell, for in hell action is dead. Man believes and lives and loves, for perfect love casteth out fear.

Hence is faith a duty. The first duty we owe to our earthly parents, because they are our parents: the first duty we owe to God, because He is God. Faith finding its expression in duty fulfilled; the duty of directing our lives into that course, which is pure and right; the duty of living in harmony with the truths which God has revealed in His Holy Word. Faith manifesting itself in action is the child's

first duty to home and father, because *he is a child.*

For this reason the Church has declared faith to be the first duty of a child in the household of God.

Chapter III

THE DUTIES CONSEQUENT UPON OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD ARE STATED

(2) Obedience

"If ye love Me, keep My Commandments"
The Church Catechism: Ten Commandments and questions thereon
(The "Book of Common Prayer," p. 267)

ON an occasion, not many months ago, some one said in our hearing, "The Episcopal Church is the one so-called religious body that does not interfere with one's religion or politics." The saying is an old one, as men count weeks, but it is no more old than true. The Church endeavors to "interfere" with nothing in life that is of a serious nature, least of all with the growth and development of the religious side of man's character. This saying, however, has in the popular mind another and a more incisive meaning. It has grown out of a misunderstanding of the Church in her attitude towards the ordinary social pleasures of her children. The saying is a slur cast upon the Church because of her *supposed* laxity of

requirement in the training of her young, and in the seemingly too natural life of her members, this latter passing without ecclesiastical rebuke.

As to what the Church does teach respecting our personal duty to God and our fellow man, we will learn in that portion of her Catechism which includes and explains the Ten Commandments. "Our duty towards God" and "Our duty towards our neighbor," as found in the Catechism, give the Church's interpretation of the Ten Commandments, and these are her instructions as to how she expects her children to endeavor to conduct themselves as Church members. He who knows not the Church's instruction must censure his own inexcusable ignorance, and not the mother upon whose gracious tenderness he has turned his back. Greater stringency of self-government, or more searching demand for purity of personal life than is found in "Our duty to God and towards our neighbor," could scarcely be devised, and these are written, and have for centuries been written in this book of Church instruction. If honesty of purpose does not lead one to inform himself before risking his condemnation, there is no other motive to which honest minds can appeal. The Ten Commandments

are appointed to be read in the hearing of the people once every week, and our children are required to commit the Ten Commandments to memory together with the Church's explanation of these Commandments.

We were studying the Catechism in order that we might declare the teaching for which the Church is responsible. In this Catechism we are first taught the relationship which God has established between Himself and us. He is our Father. In holy baptism we are born into God's family; in holy baptism we are made God's children, hence, because we have been baptized, the duties of childhood rest upon us. The first duty of a child in his earthly home is to trust his father, and to confide in his mother. This is the child's faith. Our first duty to God, as members of His family, is to trust Him. This is our faith, made the plain duty of every man, not because of the existence of any feeling or set of feelings within him, but because of the relationship established between God and himself.

Just at this point St. James, speaking in his general Epistle, will help us: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say, he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one say unto them,

Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Hence we have *something to do* in order that our faith may be proven and tested. Duty is the word. It is a pity that the spelling of this word was not retained, that its meaning might remain the more evident; d-u-t-y-e,—due-to-ye; that which one *owes* another. Obedience to the principle of government in our Father's house, because he is our Father.

This duty, in no respect, depends upon our feelings or emotions; is not self-imposed, nor can it be disposed of by self. The duty of obedience is, in no sense, arbitrary. The obligations of our ordinary home-life do not originate in, nor are they dependent upon, the passing feeling of a passing moment. Obligations, whether in the Church, or in the world, whether between man and man, or man and his God, are dependent upon relationships, and hence within the limit of their fulfilment, they are permanent and fixed. Obligations are what they are, because we bear certain rela-

tionships. We are in duty bound to do thus and so, whether we feel like it or not; and thus to live, because we are related,—because we are "members one of another."

As members of an earthly family, we owe certain duties to that family: as members of a common race, we owe certain duties to our fellow man; as children of God, we owe certain duties to our heavenly Father. What these latter duties are God, and God alone, has the right to determine. The law *of* God must be the law *for* man, and God's law is written in the Ten Commandments. For this reason the Church sets forth these Ten Commandments in her Catechism as the expression of the second duty of God's children in God's household, the Church.

It is well to give this matter its proper emphasis. The law of our ordinary home-life, does not press upon our grown children only, nor upon our supposed good children only. The law of our home-life is intended for all of our children. It marks the government of our father for his children, because they are his children, and not because of some quality any one of them may, or may not, possess. And this earthly home is the figure God has chosen to make known His parental control. Hence does it follow that the Ten Commandments

apply to all alike, and to every member of the household they appeal, demanding a respectful hearing and an humble obedience, on pain of incurring the father's displeasure. I cannot say, "I am not a member of the Church," meaning thereby, "I have not been confirmed; I do not kneel at the communion rail, and therefore, I am not amenable to the Ten Commandments." The Ten Commandments contain the law of our Father's house, and therefore, they are the law that must govern our lives, whether we will have it so, or not. The Ten Commandments demand that we ratify our baptism, and he is the more guilty who would neglect the one that he may escape the other. The Ten Commandments do not ask whether or not we have been confirmed. As the moral law, we must be guided by them because we have been born into this world. More particularly are they the law of our Father's house, and, therefore, a law unto us because we have been baptized.

Let us study the Ten Commandments in their relationship to Church membership. Every home has its own customs and traditions that are peculiar to itself. One family eats breakfast at six in the morning and another at nine; one family sits to ask a blessing, another stands. In one family the children hang their

empty stockings at the Christmas season, about the chimney corner, to be filled when their little eyes are sleeping; in another family, the gifts are distributed at the breakfast board. These are mere customs that ever vary in different households, and yet ordinary social courtesy demands that we respect them and submit ourselves to their control in our social intercourse. Should it seem strange that there are customs in the Church too, and shall we be less courteous in God's house than in our neighbor's?

But, besides these customs, there are certain *principles* of government in every home. There are things in every home as fixed and determined as the law of the universe, which a child must not do, because he is a child. There are certain things which, if the family is to be preserved, the child dare not do. There are certain things upon which, as a foundation, the family is built, and their disregard means the destruction of the family. There are certain principles of government and personal control that are necessitated by the relationship that makes family existence possible. To use a simple and, by some regarded, an insignificant example;—a child must not (save when sickness demands it) have his meals served in his own private room; that would

break up the family gathering. A child must not lead a selfish life that lives but will not let live; that would destroy the unity of the household. A child must not lead a life independent of the rest of the same home, for he is a member among members. In regard to any and everything that is inconsistent with home-life, the father says, "Thou shalt not." Against any and everything that opposes peace and stability in the home; against any and everything that is subversive to the relationship that makes the family a possibility, there is a law as binding as life, and as unyielding as truth. It is written in the constitution of things; it is stamped as the moving principle of creation: its voice murmurs the warning in the sleeping conscience of man as it has been thundered from the high courts of heaven,—"Thou shalt not."

This is no arbitrary enactment, demanding obedience from some and excusing others from observance, nor is it a superfluous fringe. It is an essential to existence; the family life requires it. The heart must cease its throbbing when the arteries refuse to receive and the veins to return the life stream that must flow to give life. The family must cease to exist whose members decline their part that gives life to the household. "Thou shalt not" is

one half of the law of the living God, and if he would live man must recognize that law.

With such a law men may tamper; at such a law men have smiled. I have seen a home where love nestled as a sweet presence and where peace was breathed as air: I have seen a home where man and woman rested and God's immortelles were growing; I have seen the wife as the centre; the father as the head, and little children as jewels in the setting. I have seen such a father, honored because he was honorable, enter such a home, reeling under the intoxication of strong drink. God has said "Thou shalt not bring into your house anything that is inconsistent with the home-life." I have seen such a father, and such a home, and such a disregard of such a law. Why detail the result? It is the old story of shattered hope and peace destroyed; it is the old story that has made one less home on the earth that hath so few. It must be so; there is no escape, for God hath said, "Thou shalt not do that which is inconsistent with the relationship which makes you a father; thou shalt not forget the presence of the wife, nor shalt thou set an example that would dishonor your son to follow; thou shalt not introduce into the home circle the poison of home-life." Let man, for any reason, decline

to hold himself amenable to this law; let him transgress its mandate, and deny its jurisdiction; who can ward off the consequence? "God is not man that He should lie; neither the Son of man that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" God hath said, "Thou shalt not," and the necessary result of the breach of that law is the destruction of the home. The experiment has been tried millions of times, under millions of conditions, by millions of men and the result is always the same. There is not one possible exception; confidence is destroyed and the home is sacked. What is true of the earthly home is also true of the Church, for God hath chosen one the figure of the other.

In the presence of God, angels do bow their heads in worship and archangels do veil their faces at the mention of His holy name. In the presence of God, man doth take that holy name for an idle use, to fringe a vulgar story and give pretended point to an angry word. God hath said, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

The Lord's Day is made a holiday; the day upon which to indulge in pleasures for which we have not the time during the week days when monied interests are at stake; a day for

social gatherings, to the injury of our Father's house of prayer; a day for hunting and a day for games. God hath said, "Thou shalt not." The law is written in the nature of things; its transgression is inconsistent with the existence of God's family, and destructive to the honor due to God, our Creator, our Father and our Friend. In regard to each and all such transgressions, God hath said, "Thou shalt not." Let the man who is bold enough to meet the consequences, turn a deaf ear to the warning.

There are certain things which a child must not do, because he is a child. There are certain things which the fact of birth into a constituted family presupposes as unthinkable. They find their expression in the first question and answer of the baptismal service: "Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them?" "I renounce them all; and, by God's help, will endeavor not to follow, nor be led by them." They find their expression in the Ten Commandments, and these the Church sets forth, together with her interpretation, for the guidance of those who have entered her fold, and have been enrolled as members in the household of God.

On the other and positive side, there are certain things which a child must do, because he is a child. Whatever tends to maintain the family life; whatever strengthens its existence and sustains its order, the child must do. The family comes first and then the individual; the relationship is first, and whatever maintains that relationship is duty. We are born members of the human race and are therefore subject to the law that governs that race. Nature will not reverse her laws because of disobedience. Nature punishes the offense and moves on to bestow her blessing upon the obedient. We are born members of a particular family, the law and control of which we must respect. We are baptized members of the Church, and the principles which govern the Church must control our lives. To disobey, or to neglect, is to remove neither the law nor the obligation. There are certain things which the fact of birth into a constituted family presupposes as conditions of family life. They find their expression in the last question and answer of the baptismal service: "Wilt thou then obediently, keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?" "I will, by God's help." They find their expression in the Ten Commandments in the form: "Thou shalt."

This is the meaning of the Ten Commandments as applied to life in the world and life in the Church, and this is the moral teaching for which the Church holds herself responsible. This is the moral law of Judaism in regard to which the Master said, "I came not to destroy." The Sermon on the Mount, taking these for a text, has broadened the principle, and made the motive a transgression. "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you, whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

The law of Judaism was a rule of action; the law of Christianity is a principle of life. To the Jew it was obedience to the letter; to the Christian it is submission to the spirit. We are no longer under rule to be lashed into line as slaves are lashed; we are under the freedom of childhood. The government of my Father's house controls my life, because He is my Father and I am His child. In one sentence St. Paul sums up the whole duty and states the principle: "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all under the Lord."

This brings us to the consideration of another phase of the same question that has, at times, disturbed the minds of some who do not think, and yet who are loudest in their denunciation

of the Church because of her supposed laxity in morals.

Bodies of Christian folk have associated themselves into organizations, and under their over-zealous leaders have formulated rules for the government of those who have so bound themselves together, confusing the consciences of men and women with the well-nigh endless "don'ts" of modern sects. "You must not do this, and you must not do that, and you must not do the other"; and then, turning to the Church, whose children had entered the paradise of the blessed for near a score of generations before these societies were thought into existence, they ask, with ill-concealed sneer, "What are the rules of the Episcopal Church?" It is strange that men who think on straight lines in every other department of life seem without mind to guide or judgment to settle a plain question for themselves when they enter the domain of the Christian life. Why is it that men do not think? Rules? The Church has no rules for the government of her children. "Is it true, then, that the Church permits her members to go to parties, and to the theatre, and to mingle with the ordinary social pleasures of life?" We might as well answer the question with the same directness with which it is asked, and let our scandalized

brother think the matter over at his more patient leisure. The Church has no rules for the government of her children. As to the social pleasures of life the Church does so permit, if letting alone that with which she has no business may be accounted "permission." The Church has no more to do with my social pleasures, as such, than she has to do with the political party to which I belong, or the store I occupy for the transaction of my secular calling, or the system of medicine I have practiced in my household. If the Church were a human society she would no doubt impertinently have undertaken to go beyond the wisdom of the Master, and have given such directions. As a matter of fact, rules belong in the kitchen where the servants work; the father's household is governed by principles.

It is necessary to return for a moment and take up the line of thought where we dropped it when it became proper to consider this phase of the Christian life that seems so sorely to disturb the minds of some Christian folk. The Master said, "When ye pray, say, Our Father." The Church is God's family. God is our Father, and we are His children. The Church is God's household. Now let me ask,—Who controls *your* home and makes the government that directs the management of

your children? You surely must have some such government. Have I, who can only enter your house by the courtesy of an invitation, the right to make the law that shall control it? Let that question be answered; it is a just one and lies close to another which you have asked. Your breakfast hour is fixed by the head of your house, and I am invited to partake of your bounty; how would I be regarded did I enter your house and attempt to change this hour and enforce another? You have certain requirements for the control of your children; can I add to those requirements and enforce upon your children a law that is of my own creation, condemning your little ones as unfaithful in the discharge of their duty to you, because, forsooth, they refuse to submit to a system of rules which I have impertinently attached to the control of a house that is not mine, and to the government of a home I have entered through the courtesy of an invitation? No man would be long in settling that question. If I cannot reorder and reorganize your house, by what possible right can I reorder and reorganize God's house? If I cannot make and enforce rules for the government of your house and the control of your children, by what possible right can I make and enforce rules for the

government of God's house and the control of God's children? That is the question which settles this whole matter, and upon that issue the Church has accepted its settlement. Every head of every house must arrange for the government of his own household as he must arrange for its order of life. The Church is God's household. God doth make for His house His own government and control, and to these no invited guest may add and from these no invited guest may take away. Woe to him who doth bind about the children's neck a yoke the Father hath been pleased to remove.

It is here that the Church is misunderstood and misinterpreted; it is here that the Church is misjudged and defamed. A human society may make rules for the government of its members, and expel them if they transgress those rules; but for the Church of God can no man make a rule, writing across the face thereof, "Thus saith the Lord." There is not a rule in the New Testament. The Old Testament is full of rules. "Thou shalt not pick up sticks on the Sabbath Day," is a rule. "Thou shalt not drive a goad into thy neighbor's ox," is a rule. But St. Paul has taught us that "The law was our school-master to lead us to Christ." "Ye are no longer under

bondage." The New Testament is free of such rules. Thou shalt not sign thy neighbor's name to a monied check, would be a rule; thou shalt not burn thy neighbor's barn, would be a rule; thou shalt not enter the social world, would be a rule. Thus is it not written in the New Testament, nor in this do we hear our Father's voice. This do we find: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye likewise to them. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy soul; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We find no rules in the New Testament, but we do find the *principles* of action, given in terms so clear that we may fashion our own personal rules for the government of our own personal lives; making us personally and individually responsible, not to the discipline of a human organization, but to ourselves, to our neighbor, and to the great Head of the Church.

Thus it appears to one, who cares to think of the matter, that the Church places on each of her children a responsibility more stringent than could be measured by the enactment of volumes of disciplinary rules, and that responsibility is placed where God has placed it,—upon the conscience of each individual soul in God's sight.

It will be further seen that while the Church has passed no rule of action for her children, she is ever watchful that the control which God has ordained shall be kept in mind and before our eye. Not this or that particular thing is forbidden, leaving as loopholes thousands of things that are not mentioned, but, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all unto the Lord." Practical questions rise at every turn which can only be answered by the principles that govern life: "Should I go here and there?" "Should I indulge in this or that?" The Church has the same answer for one and all under all circumstances and in all cases: "If you can do this and that as God's child, not compromising your Father's good name, and not impeding your onward growth in His kingdom; if you can indulge in this or that, and not place a stumbling-block in your brother's way;—go in peace and thank God for the roses He has let fall in your path." Who is to be the judge of these things? Shall the apron-strings of infancy never be cast away? Shall the passport of the slave forever limit the freedom of the child? God has placed individual responsibility upon the individual, and upon the individual that responsibility must rest until God removes it. Life is more positive than negative. If we would "do" more

we would have to "don't" less. "Walk in the spirit and ye will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh," is the way the Scripture puts it, and with this control the Church has been content.

The law of God's house, the Church, is contained in the Ten Commandments; the principle of its government is in the Master's teaching; the principle of our Father's house is the spirit of His children's control. Whatsoever is consistent with the relationship of Father to child,—"Thou shalt." Whatsoever is inconsistent with that relationship,—"Thou shalt not."

Faith manifesting itself in obedience; obedience the expression of faith. I believe, and *therefore* the principle of my Father's house is the spirit that controls my life.

Hence obedience is a duty. The second duty we owe to our earthly parents, because they are our parents: the second duty we owe to God because He is God. For this reason, having declared our relationship to God, and having given us the Creed as the statement of our faith, the Church requires us to learn the Ten Commandments as expressing the duty we owe to God, to ourselves and to our fellow man.

Chapter IV

THE DUTIES CONSEQUENT UPON OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD ARE STATED

(3) Prayer

"Pray without ceasing"

The Church Catechism: The Lord's Prayer and questions thereon

(The "Book of Common Prayer," p. 269)

WE have been studying the Church's method of instruction as set forth in her Catechism, and we have now reached the fourth division. This Catechism is appointed to be learned by those who are looking forward to confirmation. Confirmation admits us to the holy communion which is the Church's highest devotional service. Hence the statement that the Catechism contains everything the Church deems necessary for her children to know in order that they may "do their duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them."

It is to this Catechism that we would refer one who really desires to know what the Church teaches, and for what teaching the Church is responsible. At least a cursory

reading of the Catechism would we expect of one who would make the Church answerable for the vagaries of his own disordered mind, and responsible for the tangled network of fancied teaching which his ill-balanced imagination has woven into supposed fact.

In her Catechism, the Church begins where everything that concerns man's life and duty must begin:—not with his emotions; not with his feelings; not with his supposed knowledge; but with his relationship. This thought becomes a matter of greater concern to us when we consider that God has seen fit, first to establish the relationships of life, and then to make these the measure of all obligations, whether between man and man or between man and his God. We owe duties to our family, because we are father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or child. We owe duties to our country because we are citizens. We owe duties to God because we are His creatures. We owe duties to the Church because we are members. These duties arise not from any feelings of which we may be conscious; not in any manner or degree from the emotional side of our nature, but from the fact that we are related.

We would emphasize this thought because there is in the air we breathe a sentimental

view of life that has made duty dependent upon feeling, and character-building responsible to an effervescent environment, itself as unsubstantial as the shadow of fancied form, rather than the master hand of its own creation and the arbiter of its own destiny.

The popular pulpit of the day has tainted sober thought until, in the Church, one is supposed to be absolved from obligation if only feeling may be numbed. The emotions are made the measure of obligation, and to dispose of all responsibility, one need only say, "I do not think thus and so; I do not feel like doing it."

How long will we be in heeding the voice of the Church? If not the voice of the Church, may we not heed cries from the ditches whither the blind have fallen, who by the blind have been led? Life is a question of duty, and duty hinges, not on what we may think or feel, but on the relationship existing between ourselves and God, on the one hand, and on the other between ourselves and our fellow man. Where there is no relationship, there is no duty; where there is no relationship, there is no privilege. In the *establishment of a relationship* feeling plays no part, and therefore in the consequent duty feeling

has no control. Feelings are *results* and not necessarily forerunners.

Desire as you may; yearn for what you will: if God has not knit together the heavens and the earth, and bound man to Himself; if there is no relationship betwixt earth and heaven, then there is no possibility of inheritance.

This very relationship is the blessed message contained in God's holy word. The Old Testament tells us that God, and not chance, made the world; and hence God is the Creator and man is the creature. The New Testament links together the cords into a network, and reveals God as our Father. And, therefore, you and I *are related* to God as child to parent. God has chosen your home as the figure of His home, and instituted your family as the type and symbol of His Church. Just as your children owe you a duty and are bound by the responsibilities of life, because they are your children; so you and I, because we are God's children, are obligated and in duty bound to the life that is consistent with our Father's family.

It will be borne in mind that personal Christianity is treated from the standpoint of duty. It is the duty of a child to be a child, and to live as a child. The first duty of a child at home is trust and confidence in father and mother, not because we make it so, but because

it is so. The child is a child, and because he is a child he must have confidence in his parents. For a reason as simple as this do we find the Creed placed in the Church Catechism as the statement of the first duty we owe to God. Faith, not in what we happen to know; not in what we think we can explain; not in what we feel like accepting, but faith in God because He is our Father.

In stating the teaching for which the Church is responsible, we have of necessity revealed the sentimental unrealism of the day that would centre personal religion in and make it dependent upon our feelings and emotions. Following the type God has chosen, the earthly family, we have discovered duty as pressing upon us: first in faith, and hence the Creed; and second in obedience, and hence the Ten Commandments.

Now let us return to the home-life for a moment. How perfectly natural are the requests which little children make of their parents. Specially as the Christmas season nears, the fancy is stretched to conjecture what next will be sought, as though in the child's mind the father owned the universe. In his innocent confidence that the father is able to grant anything, the child does not hesitate to ask the gift of the moon.

The child does not stop to analyze or explain to his little mind how this or that request is to be granted. He simply knows that father is father, and that fact emboldens him to ask anything and to expect with confidence what is asked. Let it just here be remembered that full often the child, in his ignorance, asks what the parent knows would do the child harm, and for this reason the parent withholds the answer, or alters its form.

But did you ever stop to study the meaning of these requests made by your little children? Has God spoken for so many years through these tender bonds and you have not heard His voice? These little requests are prayers. They are the child's prayers to you the child's father. Do I speak unadvisedly, and in so speaking is there lack of accuracy of thought? Then listen to the Master: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will you give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will ye for a fish, give him a serpent? Or if he ask an egg, will ye offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" We use the figure from the Master's own lips and we press the thought.

Again does the little child come forward to teach us the lesson of our Christian life, praying ever to us in his simple faith, and teaching us how we ought to pray.

He would be an unnatural child who said, "My father ought to know what I want, and I will wait until he gives it to me." It is the child's *duty* to ask. Asking is the expression of confidence as well as of dependence. Asking is the natural sequence of an obedient and trusting heart; and therefore the child who refuses to ask is the unnatural, the abnormal child, deformed in heart if not in mind.

Hence it is that when the Church comes to teach us our Christian duty, having declared the relationship existing between ourselves and God; the form of our faith, and the government of our Father's house, she requires us to learn the "Lord's Prayer," the pattern of all prayer offered to God, as the expression of the duty which we His children owe to Him because He is "our Father."

Just here a question rises: How can prayer be called a duty? So often do we seek our beds at night to find the body wearied and the mind drowsy after the close of a long day's hard toiling. The thought suggests itself, "I do not *feel* like praying to-night." Shall I kneel at my bedside and say the words, the

mere words, contending the meanwhile against weariness of mind and heart? Is it my *duty* to kneel at my bedside and "say my prayers," whether I feel like it or not? Is it my duty to say my prayers because prayer is a duty? If the popular and all too common preaching of the day is either logical or Scriptural; if the religious societies about us teach the truth and are faithful witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then is prayer not a duty, nor is faith, nor is obedience. The very essence of sectarian teaching centres in the emotions, in the feelings and in the exaggerated and misplaced aspirations of the human heart. Popular Christianity, that is so modern as well as so popular, seeks the motive of action in sentiment, and determines our standing before God in answer to the question, "How do you feel": "What is your experience?" "Prayer," says this all too popular teacher, "is the outbubbling of the human heart; the overflowing of feeling." Extemporaneous forms of public worship are due to this individualism. Now, suppose my heart does not outbubble; suppose my feelings do not overflow,—what then? Such teaching leaves nothing for me but to wait, and duty the meanwhile waits and ceases to be duty. There are this day thousands of men who are waiting for the moving of these emotional waters.

This individualism that would sever and segment, split and cut up into as many parts as there are individual minds to fret and individual experiences to differ, the Church stamps as untrue and unscriptural. Feeling, as such, has no more to do with Christianity and the personal Christian's duty than it has to do with the payment of any other just debt. Feeling has no more to do with the life and duty of a Christian, than it has to do with the ordinary life and duty of a child in his earthly home. The proposition must be a plain one, that no child can excuse himself from the duties he owes to his earthly father by the statement, "I don't feel like doing it." Feelings follow as *results* and may be taken as the measure of sentiment, but character is estimated, as it is valued, by a life of action. Christianity is for me as well as for you; and while you may have and enjoy the sentiments and feelings that arise in your heart, I must decline when forced to adopt them to myself; I must be excused from judging my life by your individual experience.

Surely the principle here involved is clear enough. God has given you one disposition; to me He has given another. As our dispositions differ the one from the other, so will and so must our experiences differ. The disposi-

tion of one is bright, joyous and happy :—laughing as the summer breezes that sing midst twig and leaf :—glad as the leaping streamlet,—a garden of roses. God has made it so. The disposition of another finds its likeness in the blue-eyed lake, whose waters are too deep for surface ripples. It were not wise to force two such unlike into the mould of either. God has made them to differ in their nature, and they must differ in their experience.

This is the Church's solemn protest against the individual schools of modern Christianity. Prayer, like faith, like obedience, is written in the Catechism a duty: the duty we owe to God, not because we are well or strong or have deceived ourselves that we are good, but the duty we owe to God because He is "our Father," and because we are His children.

And now we must define the word, lest an untaught teacher should misread the lesson in an untrue definition. What is prayer? Did you think when you entered your closet and shut to the door, and then in secret opened your heart to God,—did you think you were praying and that you had nothing more to do? Is this your idea of prayer? And did you think, because your physical health was good, and your fancy played an hundred harmonies on the strings of an emotional harp,—did you

think that was a prayer because it was beautiful, because it was eloquent, because it was long, because of the tears you shed? It was sounding brass: it was a tinkling cymbal if that was all, and an angel's voice could not have saved it. Such a prayer, if this is all, reaches no higher, as it deserves to reach no higher, than the cracked walls above your head.

And did you think you had failed in prayer because the body was sick, and the mind was overworked, and the feelings did not bubble? The secret closet has its place and its meaning, and no other service can take that place; but isolated and divorced from the active service of an active life, it is a *half*-truth, the most dangerous form of error. It is just here that we begin by deceiving ourselves and end by doubting God. How often have we said: "Prayer is useless: the waste of idle breath. I have prayed earnestly, and no answer has come to me; why should I continue praying?" May not this experience, all too common with many of us, mean that we have prayed one thing in the secrecy of our closets, and lived another thing out of our closets? May it not mean that we have in the secrecy of our closets prayed God for that which, by our daily living, we have proved we do not really wish,

and would not accept were the answer made, though that answer came in the very terms of the prayer offered? An extremely subtle path lies just here, well marked by the cloven foot. Just here the devil has won many an easy victory. Well for us to ask over again, and ponder the Church's teaching:

What is prayer?

You will not find the answer to that question by scaling the heavens, nor snatch it from among the mysteries of the air. The answer to that question is upon the earth, lying hard by the ordinary paths of daily living.

The difficulty is not in God's providence, but in man's folly. When questioned, the Scripture makes no mystery of prayer. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." There is no mystery in God's gift of wisdom; the mystery would be in man's receiving the gift without effort to attain or willingness to accept. St. Andrew prayed for his brother, and the secret pleading had its meaning; but the arms thrown about St. Peter's neck and the hand that led him to the Master held the power. Prayer carried into action: prayer expressing its earnestness by an honest effort to attain that for which the prayer is offered; prayer

beginning in the closet, and then going forth with him who prays to give character to the daily life, motives to action and itself to be the master-hand, under God, to work out its own answer.

There is nothing mysterious about prayer. God is the author as well as the giver of all good things, and He has said: "If ye ask anything in the name of Jesus Christ, ye shall receive it." There are but two conditions: first, that we should ask in His name and therefore according to His will, and second that we should be in earnest. That cannot mean to ask with the lips and spurn in the life. It means nothing more nor less than what it says,—an earnest, honest and sincere request from the child to the Father.

The young man desires a stronger muscle: that is a prayer. Will the desire, unattended by effort to attain, bring the muscle? Ambition craves knowledge: that is a prayer. Will the craving, divorced from patient application, bring the knowledge? Muscles grow and knowledge increases and each has its process and its law, and these laws must be obeyed if the prayer is to be answered. The mystery of prayer would be in an answer despite neglected conditions. God has promised to be our ever ready helper: how can even God help a man

who wills not to help himself? One longs for more faith, and more patience, and an increase of Christian fortitude: that too is a prayer. Are patience and faith and fortitude bottled and cased, to be doled out as a grocer delivers his goods, by measure and by scale and by weight? Prayer *is* the soul's sincere desire, but the desire that stops short of the effort to attain is as meaningless and as fruitless as a child's hand stretched out to toy with the moon. The prayer that begins in the closet and ends where it begins is a prayer that defeats its own answer. Such a prayer is not an earnest expression of an honest wish: it is not a sincere desire, and he who so prays can only hear for answer an echo to his own vain and empty words. There is no answer to such a prayer. The prayer that is sincere may find its voice in words, but its emphasis is expressed in the manner of life, and in the determined effort to attain that for which the prayer is offered. Should one of our children come to us with the request that we would assist him in his studies, and then turn away from his books the moment we made the effort to render the aid asked for, we would know that the child did not care for the assistance sought, and would not value it if given. It would be necessary for us to turn from the request and

correct the child's manners. Possibly we may find just here an explanation of the fact that many of our prayers are not answered, as we say. It may be that our heavenly Father has had cause to correct the manners of His children at the very moment that He would most willingly have granted an earnest petition.

It would be well for us to pick up an illustration here, for we deal with a principle that has its application in every part of our nature.

I have seen one whose physical frame was so developed that even the most difficult tasks were performed with graceful ease. Such an one I have envied. To me the wish has come that my muscles too might be in like manner developed. Surely something more than a wish is needed if I am to attain its gratification. Suppose I make muscular growth a subject of prayer. Suppose I should enter my closet and kneel on my knees day after day, week after week, month after month, praying that God would give me more muscle. Do you not know that instead of growing stronger, I am getting weaker every day; and that the longer I stay in my closet on my knees (though I be "praying" for strength) the weaker I will be? And is there any mystery in this? Is the fact that in such an instance my prayer is not answered any proof that God

has not heard me? Do we not know that the method of offering this prayer contradicts every law that belongs to my body, rendering the growth of muscle impossible? If I were in earnest in offering the prayer; if I really desired more strength; if in truth I wished my muscles developed, I would be careful to obey the law of my nature. If I really wanted more muscle, I would take my secret prayer into the gymnasium and place myself under a master of physical culture, and thus become the instrument in God's hands for the answer of my prayer.

He who prays for knowledge must use the means God has provided for the attainment of knowledge. The mind is governed by law as well as the body, and if we transgress that law mental growth is, by the transgression, rendered impossible. Nor does it occur to my mind that there is any mystery in this: does it to yours? The desire, whether whispered in the soul or uttered by the voice, is only the forerunner. The desire is an important factor. Where this is wanting, no effort will be made. But it is the effort to attain that proves the desire real and that issues in realization. Make your prayer for knowledge a part of your life; from your secret communions with God in your closet, enter the university; submit your-

self to the law of your mind and the discipline of the school; be respectful and attentive to your instructors; be studious in your habits, and your prayer for an increase of knowledge will be answered. Simply prove that you are in earnest in your prayer by abstaining from any and everything that is inconsistent with the mind's education, and by doing everything in your power to forward your wish, and the mystery (?) of prayer and its answer, so far as this special petition is concerned, will be solved: nay, will solve itself.

The secret prayer of the Christian man cannot end in the secret closet. It must enter his life and prove its earnestness in the busy walks. Would you grow in grace? That is a prayer. Make the effort. Put your spiritual faculties into exercise; make use of every means of grace. If you would grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you must in your every-day life, under the ordinary conditions of your social and business calls, put your desire into action; you must live for what you have *prayed*. You will be astonished not only at the certainty of the answer to your prayer, but also at the rapidity of your own growth in the direction desired. With abundant clearness has our Lord impressed upon us this teaching in the very prayer given under

His name and authority. "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." How is God's name to be hallowed if we do not in our daily conversation hold it sacred? "Thy kingdom come." A kingdom is a government with a king, and a king is a governor with subjects. How is a kingdom to be maintained if the subjects do not fight for its maintenance? This is the figure the Master used, and none other is needed. In one place we are called "soldiers." If we are in earnest in the prayer that God's kingdom may come, we must take that prayer into our lives and, having put on the whole armor of God, we must see that our manner of living does not render the answer to the prayer impossible in our time. "Give us this day our daily bread." "By the sweat of your brow" will that petition be answered. The Lord's Prayer contains petition after petition driving us out of our closets and into the busy world, where wrong holds the sway, in order that having prayed, we may ourselves become God's agents for the answer to our own prayers.

The story of a little child's interruption at family prayers is a true story I believe, and illustrates the thought in hand. It was in a home that abounded in home comforts; the family had gathered for the devotions of the

evening, and as the father led in prayer, he remembered the poor and the hungry and the destitute, and prayed lustily and loud that God would feed the hungry and provide for those who needed. These words caught the ear of a little child kneeling reverently at his father's side, and, forgetting that no provisions had been made for interruptions, he exclaimed, "Papa, if I had as much corn in my crib as you have in yours, I would answer that prayer myself." I knew a man who prayed God night after night to take away his thirst for drink, and yet he bought his morning cigar *in a saloon* and always took his toddy before he lit his cigar. Thus do we trifle with half-truths, and in our folly censure Providence.

Just here the plain road we have followed forks again, and a path of quick ending leads downward to entice those who are in eager search for error. "If so much depends upon my own effort, why need I waste the time in praying? Why may I not accomplish what I wish without appealing to God? What is the use of prayer, if after all the answer depends upon myself?" It is plain that only a wilfully blind man could so question, and yet even blind men must be considered. The questions are silly, but we must not call them so lest we offend. They lie at the root of

rank fatalism, but we must overlook that and patiently make answer.

We stated that prayer was twofold: The cry for God's help on the one hand, which is the expression of our filial dependence; and on the other hand man's effort, which proves the cry an earnest one. Human effort, unattended by prayer for Divine aid, is simply an impertinence. Again echoing the oft repeated teaching of Holy Scripture "without Me ye can do nothing," the Catechism comes forward with a clear answer. Immediately after pointing out "our duty to God" and our "duty to our neighbor," and by way of giving the reason and necessity for prayer, the Church teaches us the sad lesson of human inability: "My good child, know this; that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve Him, without His special grace, which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer." And again, quoting from one of the collects, "Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves." The inability of man becomes God's opportunity when man seeks God's help, and then by the manner of his life proves that his cry is an earnest one. God's dealing with man finds many illustra-

tions in man's dealing with his fellow man. A child had fallen into a cellar and sitting at the bottom called for help. The father's voice was not an unkind one that made answer,—"My child, I cannot reach you unless you help yourself. Stand up and stretch your hands as far upward as they will reach, and then I will reach down to them." How forcibly are we reminded of the paralytic who came to the Master with a withered arm and the Master's command, "Stretch forth thy hand." How clearly do the words sweep across the ages from that silent tomb, "Lazarus, come forth." God demands human effort as the condition of divine aid.

He prays best who lives best; who makes the work and walk of the day the echo of the secret bedside kneeling. Prayer is a life, and hence prayer is a duty: the duty we owe to God, not because we feel like praying; not because we imagine ourselves good enough to come into His presence, but because God is our Father and we are His children. The duty of a child's dependence makes prayer the duty of our life.

Chapter V

THE PRIVILEGE CONSEQUENT UPON OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD IS STATED

The Holy Communion

"Do this in remembrance of Me"
The Church Catechism completed
(The "Book of Common Prayer," p. 270)

WE have reached the fifth and last division of the Church Catechism. It will be well to keep the thought in mind that the Church, throughout her teaching, has followed the figure chosen of God, namely, the earthly family; and while instructing her children, she seeks to lead them into the performance of their duty as children of one household, with a common Father and common interests.

Beginning with the relationship of childhood, the Church places before us Church duties which find their type in the ordinary home-life. It is my duty to trust my father; to subject myself to the control which he has established in his house, to lean upon him for support and to ask him for what I want. These duties come to me in my home because

it is my home, and these duties I owe to my father because he is my father.

Such is the figure the Church has followed in teaching us our duties to God. God is our Father and the Church is His family; we are God's children because we are members of the Church, and as children we owe to our Father the duty of trust, and obedience, and prayer. For this reason the Church requires us to learn, in order that they may be guides to our daily living, The Creed, The Ten Commandments and The Lord's Prayer. It is the purpose of the Church that we should grow up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" as normally and as naturally as, under proper training, our children develop in our earthly homes.

The Christian life has been made hard and its conditions difficult to comprehend in proportion as it has been taken out of the natural order in which God did arrange it. Instead of following the simple language and figure of the Scripture, where duty is the law, and obedience is the principle, and privilege is the reward; the popular pulpit has over-emphasized the emotions, and made feeling the controlling motive of life. The Church teaches us to live as children because we are children, trusting our Father to deal with our infirmi-

ties and weaknesses and frailties as His infinite love and tenderness shall determine to be best.

With this teaching clearly in mind, a question will bring into prominent view the Church's closing instruction. We have learned our duties in the Church and the privileges that are ours by virtue of our membership,—how are these duties to be performed in order that we may finally enter into the rest that remaineth for the children of God? If the Church is indeed God's family and we are indeed God's children; if we are expected to live as children should live, in obedience to the government of our Father's household: are there no helps; no assistances? Does the Church expect us, unaided and alone, to perform these duties and meet these obligations? Such questions press upon us as effort develops weakness and repeated failure brings discouragement.

It is easy enough to tell somebody else how to live; it is easy enough to stand off, as many a self-imagined brave man is doing to-day, and boastfully assert the kind of church member he would be *if he ever made a start;* it is easy enough to fight by proxy, and think valiant thoughts with a substitute in the field. But when the hand has been laid to the plough

and life has been entered upon in earnest; when the true man has come to himself, and the effort is made in an honest and good heart to lay hold on eternal life; when habits are to be broken and passions are to be controlled; when self is to be conquered and evil tendencies are to be mastered; when the little boat has been headed up stream to face the current of wrong and sin and worldliness,—the cry is soon uttered, as the need is soon felt, for some sustaining hand and some power to steady the movement.

To love God with all our heart: to love our neighbor as ourself, and to do unto all men as we would have them do unto us,—who is equal to these things? And if we are not equal to the performance of these duties, whence shall we find help?

This question most frequently assumes another form, and for the sake of clearness it might be well to give it that form also: Does the Church open her arms to us because we are good and on account of our goodness, or is the Church a place for those who are spiritually sick; a hospital for the reception of the weak and infirm and the diseased, whose presence is a confession to themselves and to the world that they are not able of themselves to help themselves, and therefore, that they stand in

need of the Father's sustaining hand? The question opens another field of thought and its answer will declare the difference between the Church of God and the modern society, instituted by unbalanced individual enthusiasts to bear their own individual names. Let the question be asked again, Should we enter the Church because we need help, or because we have already attained such a degree of goodness that we may grace by our presence the courts of the Most High God? Having entered the Church in and because of our weakness, has the Church made provision to render us the aid our infirmity demands?

Let us return to our home-life and study over again the figure God has chosen to make plain His dealing with us, His children. What is the treatment your children receive at your hands? How are your little ones enabled to do their duty in your home? Is your little child, unaided, unhelped and unsupported, pushed forward into the active duties of home-life; blamed and censured and punished when through very weakness and ignorance he is not able to do what you think he should do; driven away from home and expelled from membership in his father's family when temptation overtakes him and for the time he is tripped and falls? Is this the way your home

is regulated, and is this the way your children are treated, and is this the kind of father you are? Is not the contrary true; the parent's arms ever outstretched; the eye ever watchful; the heart ever yearning? To our mind the initial idea of home suggests a place of shelter and protection and support. The roof and the walls and the dividing partitions, and even the garden fence, are all suggestive of the father's providence. Is there not a table at your home, provided for your child because he is your child, and not because of some special *quality* he may possess? Is not the fact that your little child is weak, and frail, and in need, the motive that leads you all the more to make such special provision that by eating, and in eating, and through eating, the child may gain strength to do that which, without the food, he would not be able to do? Do only your good children, only your pretty children, only your healthy children, only the children that have reached years of advanced experience find food and sustenance at your hands; or, do you provide for your child *because he is your child?* And is God, our heavenly Father, less tender and less thoughtful and less merciful than you?

It is to this very figure that the Master appeals in making provision for the strength and

the support of those who would follow Him. "Give us this day our daily bread," is one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, and He who bade us "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," promising that all other needed things shall be added, did afterwards institute at a feasting table, "The Lord's Supper," whereof we might eat and live forever.

It is just here that the popular preaching of the day again fails; just here that the simple figure the Master used has been ruthlessly pushed aside, and the myth of modern superstition and arrogant assumption forced in its place, to the dishonor of God and to the confusion of His household. What is the meaning of those oft-repeated expressions so common in our midst,—"I am not good enough to come to the holy communion; I am not worthy." What do these expressions signify if not that "goodness" and "worthiness," which if they could exist would be *qualities* of the individual, are grounds upon which the holy communion is to be received?

This is again to centre personal Christianity in the feelings; the Christian character in sentiment, and to make the emotions the mainspring of action. Under the influence of such teaching I am drawn to the holy communion, not because it is my Father's table and as His

child I am invited, but because through self-deception I am led to believe myself "good" and "worthy." This is to contradict the Master's teaching in every word He has uttered, and to negative the spirit of the Gospel. This teaching is untrue as it is unscriptural, and where it obtains the home has ceased to be the figure of the Church; the Father has left the child, His child, unsupported and uncared for: man has become more tender and more merciful and more loving than God.

It becomes necessary to go back to definitions, and study the institution of the holy communion and its meaning, if we would kneel at our Father's table and receive at His hands the food He has provided for the spiritual strengthening of His children. One or two questions will bring the matter well to the front and clear the way for what is to follow. When the Master was on earth, did He ever invite any one to come to Him because of personal "goodness"; or, in reference to any blessing He came to bestow, did the Master ever intimate that we must be "good" before we could partake of that blessing? Does the Scripture say anywhere that we may come to the holy communion because of our "worthiness"? Such a thought, awful in its deformed proportions, was rendered possible only as the

natural sequence of a teaching that has preceded it, and of which the Holy Scripture knows nothing; a teaching that has blurred the Master's invitation to a lost and sinning world, and has made that invitation depend upon the feelings and emotions of the human mind and heart.

Hence, much will depend upon the understanding we have of the institution of the holy communion; the place it occupies in the system of Christian teaching and practice, and the use the Master meant us to make of it in the personal life He has given each one of us to live.

There are two extreme views held by Christian people regarding the holy communion, and midway between these two extremes the Church stands. On the one hand are those who teach that "immediately after the consecration, the veritable body of our Lord, and His veritable blood, together with His soul and divinity, are under the species of bread and wine." These have fallen into the trap of ultra materialism. On the other hand are those who deny the "inward and Spiritual grace." These have robbed the Lord's Supper of its divine institution and made it a common meal, whose only spiritual benefit is the result of individual self-contemplation; a memorial

pure and simple. The Church accepts the mystery and teaches that the holy communion, being a sacrament, "is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and is a pledge to assure us thereof."

Upon your acceptance of the error contained in either of these two extreme views, or your acceptance of the Church's teaching, will depend your personal relation to and the use you make of the holy communion. You will find yourself kneeling before and adoring the material element; or running away from a gracious invitation; or an obedient, loving child in your Father's home and at your Father's table. The one extreme teaching, that of the Church of modern Rome, we may dismiss without comment. We speak of the "Lord's Supper" and this the Church of Rome will pretend to respect when the cup is restored to the people, and the holy feast is no longer mutilated. For the general fear and dread of the Lord's table modern sectarianism is responsible, and this latter will require a moment's consideration.

Modern sectarianism sees in the holy communion only a badge: only a sign. To such teachers the holy communion is only a memorial service, commemorative of something that

took place eighteen hundred years ago; a service the benefit of which is purely subjective and resulting from pious meditation thereon. If it has ever been your unfortunate chance to be present at what is called the communion service in one of these bodies of Christian people so teaching, you will find in the teaching an explanation of the irreverent handling of the sacred elements. The method of distributing the elements interprets the teaching, as the teaching alone makes possible the method. There is not a common meal in our ordinary homes that is treated with the same loose picnic manner of serving. Why should it be otherwise if we are only dealing with chips from a deserted graveyard? Unfortunately, there are conclusions that follow immediately from the teaching, and with these conclusions we are concerned, for they have influenced men's lives and driven God's children from the Father's table.

If the holy communion is a sign merely, it must signify something; if it is a badge merely, it must represent something. The order of Masons has a badge, and before I can wear that badge I must be what the badge stands for,—that is, I must be a Mason. If the holy communion is a badge merely, I must, before receiving the holy communion, be what

the badge stands for. If a sign merely, the holy communion can only signify holiness and goodness and worthiness. Plainly I must be holy and good and worthy before I put that badge on. Who wonders that an honest heart should recoil from such a profession! How natural is the language, "I am not good enough; I am not worthy," and it is as true as it is natural. There was never anybody "good enough" to come to the holy communion, and consistency would require the closing of the chancel gates and a total withholding of the sacred feast from the preacher as well as from the congregation of sinners.

The trouble is with the teaching. The teaching is untrue and unscriptural, demanding as a condition of acceptance the very spirit of self-righteousness which the Master condemned with scathing rebuke.

Let us again ask the question: Did the Master ever invite anybody because of his goodness? Did the Master ever say, Do this in remembrance of your own worthiness? These questions must be answered if we would hear the Lord's invitation to the Lord's Supper, and learn the needed preparation that will enable us "worthily" to kneel at the Lord's table.

Down through the ages a voice is sounding

if we would hear it, seeking the garret and the hovel, where want and bitterness and tears and mourning and emptiness have their dwelling: "Come unto Me all ye that travail and are heavy laden." "I am the Bread of Life." "Do this in remembrance of Me." These are the Master's words, and this is His invitation. Not because of our goodness, but because of what He has done for us, are we invited. And therefore is the holy communion not a sign merely; not a badge merely. The holy communion is our spiritual food and sustenance. It is the Lord's Supper. It is our Father's provision for His children *because they are His children.* "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness." There can be little doubt as to the significance of this language,—the earthly home which God has chosen as the type of His Church, the father's family and the father's provision, come forward to offer an easy explanation, as far as explanation is required, of the blessed sacrament now instituted as the spiritual food and sustenance of our souls.

And, therefore, in the Church Catechism, after we have been taught our relationship to God and the duties consequent thereon, we are supposed to be "about our Father's business," —praying and working and living that His

kingdom may come and that His will may be done on earth as in heaven. Growing weary of the strife and weakened by contact with evil and sin without, and through our own personal infirmities within, the holy communion is given us "for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls." It is the Lord's Supper.

This changes the whole method of preparation. It reverses the order and makes unworthiness the motive and weakness the ground of acceptance. "We do not presume to come to this Thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy table." Should one come desiring to receive the holy communion upon the ground that he felt "good enough" and "worthy" of the privilege, the Church would decline its administration. The surest sign and proof that we are not in a state of preparation to receive the holy communion is the feeling that we are good enough to come, and that we are worthy to kneel at the Lord's table.

"And He took bread." Bread has but one meaning and that meaning appeals in no sense to the man who has feasted. Bread is a food, and as food answers the craving of the *hungry*. Bread is one of the ordinary means of sustain-

ing life and replenishing wasted strength. Bread is intended for the weak because of weakness. Bread is meant to give strength. A feast is intended to be eaten, not gazed upon, and the benefit comes in the eating. If this thought can be lodged in our minds, we will be saved the untold troubles that harass the souls of many honest folk. The Master has instituted His supper and invited us to partake of His bounty, not because of any *quality* we may possess; rather because of the absence of such quality. Not because we are strong, but because we are weak: not because we are good, but because we are not good: not because we are worthy but because we are not worthy. The holy communion is intended to make us what we are not, and to enable us to attain that after which we hunger. The holy communion is our spiritual food, and hence the Master said, "Take, eat"; "Drink ye all of this."

What then is the proper preparation for receiving the holy communion? We have tables of our own; what is the proper preparation for an ordinary feast? God has chosen our home as the type of the Church: the ordinary table is not only a part of that home-life, but it is a very important part. The language we use in our homes is the language

the Master has chosen to convey His thought to us. It is impossible to read the Scripture-story of the institution of the holy communion without seeing the immediate connection between the figure and the substance. We rather suspect that the difficulty in many minds lies in the fact that the answer regarding preparation is so simple. The old story is told over again, "My father, if the prophet had bade thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much better wash and be clean." We look for mystery where God has placed no mystery, and as unwisely would we snatch away the veil where God has placed it as a covering. What is the preparation for an ordinary meal? The answer can be spoken in a child's voice,—hunger. The meal is without meaning save to the hungry. The man who has satisfied his appetite turns away from food with distaste. It is the hungry man who grasps the thought of food and hastens to partake. The more hungry he is, the less does he demand explanation. What the hungry man wants is food, not talk; food, not explanation, and he wants the food because he is hungry.

With pointed and clear meaning the Master's words are recalled, "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness."

This very hunger is our preparation for the reception of the holy communion. The soul conscious of its loneliness; the heart emptied of its love; the body wearied with its burden; the whole man craving a better life, a stronger faith, a deeper devotion and a more consecrated spirit: the heart hungering and thirsting because of its acknowledged emptiness; well nigh whipped in the unequal strife against wrong and evil and sin; stumbling in its weakness, but fighting still the good fight of faith:—such a heart is best prepared to bow before the God who made it and receive at His hands the broken body and the shed blood of His Son, who "came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

But what is hunger, and whence does hunger come? Again the simplicity of the answer is its stumbling-block. Physical hunger is the *result of physical exercise*, and so far from being a sign of weakness, physical hunger is a proof of physical health. Tell the physician that you have lost your appetite; that you no longer relish your food, and watch the play of his countenance. He knows all too quickly the seriousness of the case. Loss of appetite means that nature has given up the fight for life. Your physician knows that if the appetite cannot be restored, death is as certain and as

fixed as the days pass. Hunger is the sign of life as well as the truest preparation for eating, and this hunger is nature's gift to those who obey nature's laws in the exercise of the body.

The Master says: Come, because you are weak; eat, because you are hungry, and the ready answer we are taught to make is, "I am too hungry; I am too weak; I am afraid I am not good enough. If I am going to make a mistake, I would prefer making it on the safe (?) side; I would rather stay away from the holy communion than run the risk of being an unworthy partaker. St. Paul has some very strong language on the subject of unworthy people."

So we argue and make excuse, and so we deprive ourselves of the holy communion as a means of grace. Neither St. Paul nor any other inspired writer has one word to say that should discourage us from going to the holy communion on the ground of our unworthiness. Such a teaching has a more modern source. It is the result of the preaching of the popular pulpit of this blessed century in which we live. There is not in the Scripture a line or a word that can be tortured into a meaning that is even kindred to this. St. Paul speaks of receiving "unworthily." Unworthy is an adjective and describes the *person*, and this

word St. Paul does not use in connection with receiving the holy communion. "Unworthily" is an adverb and describes the *manner* of receiving, and has to do not with us, but with our preparation. This word St. Paul does use, warning us to examine ourselves before we presume to eat. One may be most unworthy, and at the same time he may receive the holy communion in a most worthy manner, that is most "worthily."

To carry the figure a step further, we may unworthily eat ordinary bread and meat. You can try the experiment if you will, and you need use neither knife nor poison. Suppose you go into your room and stay there. Prepare an easy chair and cushioned sofas. Provide light reading and loll for six months in idleness. At the end of that time a meal like unto the one you ate to-day, with relish and benefit, will poison you. You will have what the doctors call "dyspepsia." Dyspepsia is the result of neglecting the body and of disregarding its laws until the power of assimilation is impaired. The food which God meant for your health becomes, through your neglect of the body, the source of disease and death. St. Paul's language in this connection is very striking, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

One more thought remains and that we can put before you in short sentences. "What are the benefits whereof we are partakers in the holy communion?" "The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ as our bodies are by the bread and wine." "As: So." As bread strengthens the body, so does the holy communion strengthen the soul. How do the consecrated elements of the holy communion strengthen the soul? I do not know: nor do I know how bread nourishes the body. Why should bread and not sand nourish the body? I do not know. The mystery in the one is as great as, and no greater than, the mystery in the other. Each is beyond man's comprehension; and yet bread does nourish the body, and the holy communion does strengthen and refresh the soul, whether we understand it or not. Each is true because God says it is true. How; and why; and when and through what changes, if any, the elements pass during the consecration: I do not know. The Church has declined to define what God has not defined.

"His was the word that spake it;
He took the bread and brake it;
And what His word did make it,
That I believe and take it."

God who made the body instituted bread for

its nourishment; God who made the soul instituted the Lord's supper for its nourishment. The holy communion is our Father's provision for His children because they are His children; and as His children He invites us to eat at His table.

Let the words be spoken over again and let them be remembered: The truest preparation for an ordinary meal is hunger, and hunger results from physical exercise. The truest preparation for the holy communion is hunger, and this hunger results from spiritual exercise.

Not in the closet only, with doors closed to the world; nor in the hermit's cave, separated from life's grave tasks; but in the ordinary walks of life, doing our duty in that state to which it has pleased God to call us, will we find our truest preparation for the holy communion; the hunger and thirst after righteousness which is the Master's sign of fitness, and which has ever received the Master's welcome to the Lord's supper.

Thus you have the Church's full round of teaching, as set forth in her catechism,

The child at home;
The child in the Church.

With this teaching accepted, the Church's

attitude towards the innocent pleasures of childhood is easily understood. Feelings, and sentiments, and emotions, and gladness, and joy, and sorrow too, have their meaning now. They follow as results from duty done, and in accordance with the peculiar disposition of each child and the experience of each life.

Life in touch with life along the whole line of Christian thought; the first century overlapping the last; the humblest member of our Father's family standing side by side with the grand apostle: "When I was a child, I spake as a child: I understood as a child: I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Chapter VI

THE CHURCH'S TEACHING ON THE SUBJECT OF CONVERSION

WE have spoken of the relationship we bear to God, and the duties and the privileges resulting from that relationship: "When ye pray, say, our Father." Hence we are God's children. The home-life that is natural in our earthly family is the forecasting, the shadow of our home-life in God's family, the Church.

We say there is a natural child-life, and that a child who is brought up in a home, with kindly treatment, affectionate surroundings and gentle associations, will naturally attain certain characteristics and be conscious of certain experiences. It is perfectly *natural* for a child so brought up to love and reverence his earthly father, and the natural *expression* for this love and reverence is obedience.

This is the result of normal home-life. Under such circumstances (and they are ordinary and every-day) the child cannot remember

when he began to love home and parent. His earliest words were the lispings of mother's name: his earliest recollections are the strong arms of his father that were so tender in their strength. The child has been loved into loving. He has never known anything else. He is a stranger to harsh treatment, and would the rather stare in wonder at its first visitation.

Shall we say that the child does not love, because he is not conscious of beginning to love? Must we say that the child is not a true child; that his affection and obedience are not acceptable, because he does not remember when they began and cannot trace their growth?

I question if we so judge our little ones. I question if we would not rather be surprised did our little children evince any other than this ordinary opening into conscious years. On the contrary, it is to this very end that we teach our children and lead them and guide them, that when they grow up, and *as* they grow up, they may be as young plants unfolding into life.

This, we say, is the natural child-life. He knows no sudden transition; no sudden change. He can know neither. The child's bringing up, if we may use such a home expression,

does not permit the experience of sudden change. From infancy to childhood he has *grown*, and this growth includes his heart-life as well as his body-life and mind-life.

Now the earthly home being the figure, and the earthly father being the type, God has chosen to express the relationship we bear to Him, why should we not expect the same gradual growth in our spiritual selves?

This is the Church's teaching. Coming to confirmation is the *natural* thing for a child to do. Having been brought up in the Church as a home; having been taught that the Church is our Father's house and we His children; having been surrounded by Christian influence and Churchly teaching, what has the child to do, on coming to years of discretion, but to acknowledge his home, his Father, his family, and to enter consciously upon the duties and privileges of his home life?

This is to ratify his baptism. This is to confirm the promises made when he was baptized, and be confirmed and strengthened for their fulfilment.

The Church teaches this to be the ordinary and normal experience of her children, and that no more sudden and conscious change is to come to a child properly brought up in the

Church than to the same child properly brought up in an earthly home.

The child is to be and to continue what he is:—a child; and being a child of the earthly family from his birth, and a child of the Church from his baptism, his duty on coming to years of discretion is to be the best child he can, and to manifest that determination *by the way he lives.*

In the one case he confirms his earthly relationship and receives his earthly father's blessing; in the other he confirms his heavenly relationship and receives his heavenly Father's blessing. In either case his confirmation is the natural result of the fact that the child has had a home and home training.

But we are reminded that there are children who in tender years have wandered away from home, and have grown up in strange lands; that there are those who have early turned their backs upon their father's house and, in their manner of life, have denied the family tie. We are reminded that in the large cities there are many children who have never had a home, and to whom kind treatment and loving words are unknown experiences; and that a like sad story must be told of many who have strayed away from the Church, and of many who have never enjoyed her refining

influence. Our answer is, This is all too true. But this is an *unnatural* and an *abnormal* condition, and must be treated as such.

It will not do to turn the home upside down and deny its natural laws because a child has gone astray and declined its privileges. The erring child must be treated as needs demand, but the home and home-life must be preserved. Whatever may be the experience of a child returning to a home upon which he has turned his back, surely it is not quite right to demand that the little ones who have remained under the father's roof shall pass through the same experience.

Most surely we would not deny to our children, who have been brought up at home, the fact of childhood because, having never strayed from home, they cannot experience the feelings of one who has so strayed. Surely we do not expect our children who have been brought up in a home to have the experience of a child who has never had a home.

If not in the ordinary home-life; why in the Church-life?

We say that a child brought up in a home will have one experience, and a child who has never had a home, or who has early wandered away from home, will and *must* have another experience; and that this latter being an un-

natural state and condition, the experience will be abnormal.

A homeless child, on reaching twelve or fourteen years, may be adopted into a wealthy family. He will remember the first word of kindness. He may and probably will remember when his heart began to warm towards his foster parent. This he will remember because he was a *homeless* child.

This expression of thought brings us to the abnormal spiritual condition of perhaps a large majority of people. These large numbers only show how extended has been the transgression of God's arrangement of home and Church life. Many of us have wandered from home; denied our birthright, and undervalued our privileges. Many of us have strayed very far from the Church, and lived rather as children of the evil one than as heirs of a heavenly home.

How may we return? Should such an one undergo no change? Most assuredly. A most decided change must characterize the return of one who has so strayed, and that change is apt to bear a close relation to the time and character of the wanderings.

This brings us to consider the subject of

Conversion

We know no subject that has given Chris-

tian people more anxious misgivings. Few subjects, in the hands of ignorant teachers, have kept a greater number of honest men and women away from Church membership than this.

Divorced from its true relation to normal and abnormal conditions, untaught teachers have sought to demand like experiences from all who would enter upon conscious Church membership, with no regard to their past lives; and so have erred, not only in the unequal demand made upon the individual, but most grievously in the judgment passed on the Church for recognizing the distinction between the normal and the abnormal conditions of home-life; namely, the child who has been brought up at home and the child who has never had a home.

Before entering upon the subject of conversion, let us ask a few questions, in order that the Church's position may be the more clearly portrayed:

Does the Church teach that conversion is a necessary experience in every Christian life? Yes.

Does the Church believe and teach sudden conversion? Yes.

Does the Church teach the necessity of "change of heart"? Yes. The Church

teaches all this and has always so taught. The Church teaches the necessity of conversion. She also believes that there is such a thing as "sudden conversion." But what is meant by the term "conversion"?

It will be well to bear in mind that conversion is not an experience restricted to Christianity. I may be converted from one system of philosophy to another; I may be converted from one school of medicine to another; I may be converted from one political party to another; I may be converted from one religion to another, or I may be converted from the world to Christ. In each case the term is the same, and the process is the same. Either experience is a true case of conversion.

Conversion means a change: a change of what? A change of mind? Then it is always *sudden*, and one is apt to remember the exact conditions and circumstances of the change, and the influences too which determined his action. It would be a sign of bad memory if he could not recall the hour of the day, and the place, and the company, when the change came about.

If by conversion is meant a change of *mind*, then is conversion always sudden. The mind, without exception, makes itself up in a hurry and that too on all subjects. We may think a

long time and weigh consequences, but when the mind is made up the act is always sudden. This is the law of mental process, and its application to Christian experience forms no exception. If this is what is meant by conversion, a change in the *mental* condition, a "change of mind"; then conversion is and must always be sudden.

But if by conversion is meant a change in the moral character, "change of heart" is the popular expression, then is conversion never sudden.

If there is one thing more clearly taught in the Scripture than another it is that moral character is a growth and, therefore, any change in the moral character, whether for better or worse, must be gradual, simply because it is a *growth.* Our minds may undergo sudden alteration, and lasting resolutions may be quickly formed, yet in so far as the change affects the character that change must be gradual.

Conversion, we may then say, is a turning from one thing to another.

First. It may involve a change of mind only; in such a case conversion would be sudden.

Second. It may involve a change in the manner of life only, and thereby produce an

effect upon the moral character; in such a case conversion would be gradual.

Third. It may involve a change both in mind and in manner of life; in such a case the mental change (formation of resolution) would be suddenly wrought, and a gradual result would manifest itself in the character, resulting from a change in the manner of living.

Want of clearness at this starting point is responsible for much that may be called the popular Christianity of the day. Not in the large cities so much is this evil felt, for there uncouth methods are tamed by contact with the more reasonable. But in the rural districts and in the mission fields, where our sectarian brethren have sent forth untaught teachers to minister to the unlearned, these evils are met at every turn. One would judge, if conclusion is to be drawn from their teaching, that conversion was real in proportion to its suddenness, and lasting in proportion to its violence.

I know not how else to account for the appeal that is annually, almost monthly, made to the revival system. The meeting begins with more or less persons interested in the general object of the gathering. A few services evince the fact that excitement is deliberately sought. The familiar song; the patting of the foot and

hand; the cry of the preacher's voice intermingling; the solemn "Amens" from the corner so named;—all these are contagious. The excitement grows. The mourner's bench is crowded. The services draw to a close and the world is notified that so many "conversions were made." Many an honest soul returns to his home saddened, and questions "why was I not converted too?"

We say the teaching is a truth but half told, and the more dangerous for the half truth it holds. In so far, even under excitement, as man or woman has been led to change the mind and form new resolutions, good may result. But this is not the popular understanding of the conversions, nor is it the conception of the converted, nor is it the point of the instruction given. The element of moral change, "change of heart" they call it, is involved; a change which never has been and never can be effected suddenly.

That the Church does not undervalue the formation of a resolution, and therein a change of mind, will be abundantly shown presently. The point we now make is that the sudden formation of a resolution, which deals solely with the *mental* condition, is a different thing from a change in the moral character; that conversion, meaning thereby a "change of

mind," is always sudden; that conversion, meaning thereby a "change of heart," is always gradual.

An illustration will make this plain: Suppose I should desire to become an athlete. I have observed the grace of motion in the well developed muscle and the ease with which even difficult tasks are performed, and I desire to perfect myself likewise. It should be plain that something more is needed than the *desire.* My interest is enlisted and I make some inquiries. This results in my forming a resolution. I make up my mind to become an athlete. Need one be told that making up my mind does not accomplish the object nor attain the end? The resolution is an important factor. The resolution gives point to my effort and direction to my exercise, as well as suggesting abstinence from all things inconsistent with the end in view. But the resolution to become an athlete does not make me one. I must employ an instructor and take my resolution into the school of the gymnasium. I must undergo the practice and the discipline marked down by the masters. After years of training, I become what in a moment of enthusiastic excitement I resolved to be.

Here we have the resolution, which involves a change of mind, suddenly taken; then, as a

result of acting on that resolution through years of practice, we have the corresponding "change of muscle."

Take another illustration: My father being a physician, it was but natural that my attention should be early attracted to the science of medicine. It may have been my duty as a youth to drive for my father and hold the horse, while he entered the house of sickness. I observe the interest of the family on the doctor's arrival, and the clinging confidence of the children as well as grown people. He enters as one of the household. He is the personal friend of each. This alone is attractive to my young mind. In my boyish fancy I think to myself, "I would like to be a doctor." Surely such a wish does not make me one. Years pass by and I make up my mind to be a physician. That marks the formation of a resolution and registers a "change of mind." But surely it does not make me a physician. The resolution is important. The resolution anchors my mind and gives point to my study. If I am in earnest, the resolution will be carried into effect; first to the medical college; then to the hospital; then to the practice; then after years of labor, I become what in a moment I resolved to be.

Suppose instead of an athlete or a physician,

one has resolved to be a Christian; are the changes analogous?

We must pause a moment for breath after such a question. The modern Christian is scandalized at this near approach of the ordinary to that which is assumed to be the extraordinary experience of life. So far removed is Sunday from the other days of the week, and sacred from secular work, that man, the worshiper; and man, the bread-winner; have come to be looked upon as two different creatures. So distinct are these two phases of the same life taught to be, that two unlike laws have been made for their expression.

Wherein is the reasonableness of such distinctions we fail to discover. Man is triune; body, mind and soul. Man is all three. The law which controls a change in the body and mind is a plain law, and the experience is an unvarying one. Formation of resolution, which is change of mind, comes first and is sudden, with marked and remembered circumstances, such as hour of the day, etc. Then comes change of bodily muscle and tissue, or development of mind, as the result of carrying the resolution into effect. This last is always gradual.

Who has authorized us to make a new law, and impose the same, for like changes in our

spiritual experiences? We submit that an examination of this matter will place spiritual conversion on a plain as ordinary and as every day as that which finds part and play in man's bodily and mental growth.

The spiritual life has been rendered difficult because it has been divorced from the ordinary daily life and experience of man, even though the Master has ever emphasized the spiritual not only as natural, but as the most natural life a man can lead; namely, the life most in keeping with the laws of his nature. There is one law for the whole man and that law applies with equal force to the changes that are wrought whether in his body, mind or his soul.

The man who enters a church building a drunkard will leave it a drunkard. He may, under the influence of God's Holy Spirit; he may, under the influence of some personal friend, God's instrument, resolve to stop drinking. Does that resolution break the habit? The resolution was a "change of mind." It was taken in a moment. It may have been taken in an honest and good heart and to that resolution the man may remain firm, and become a sober man. But does the resolution break the *habit* of drinking, or only mark the beginning of a fight against the habit? The question answers itself.

The man who enters a church building a drunkard will leave it a drunkard. He may leave the building a changed man in mind and purpose. He may go away resolved, by the help of God, to lead a new life; but that new life has to be led. The life a man leads fashions his character. The habit of drinking, like any other habit, must be broken as it was formed, and success in this may require many a sad year, many a tearful effort. After a while the habit is conquered, and the life becomes what a moment resolved it should be.

We are too apt to lose sight of the fact that Christianity is a growth as well as a confession, and in the process of growth is involved the whole man; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength."

A resolution to become a Christian is a resolution, a "change of mind," suddenly reached, and the corresponding change in the character will and must be gradual.

This is conversion and it is twofold. It involves a "change of mind," whereby one determines "I will serve the Lord." This step, even after deliberation, is suddenly taken and so far the Church teaches "sudden" conversion. But he who resolves to serve the Lord must *serve* Him, and this contemplates "all the days of your life." Herein is a gradual

change of the moral character, growing as seed grow, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." This latter is what the Church understands by "change of heart." The Church teaches and has ever taught that such a change is a necessary *result* in every Christian life; the result of change in the manner of living; but never a forerunner of an untested change of mind. Indeed, it is the changed life that tests the realness of the resolution.

Just here another difficulty is suggested: I resolve to become an athlete, or a lawyer, or a physician;—it may require five or ten years to make good that resolution. I resolve to become a Christian; does it require years to realize that resolution? We have not so argued. We say that Christianity is a growth *as well as* a confession. The very moment that in an honest and good heart we have, under God, resolved to devote our life to Him, we are His; and there is no instant of time between man's choice and man's salvation. Man's salvation is a matter of God's provision and promise, and is not involved in the question of "growth in grace." St. Peter and St. John, sitting by the sea of Galilee, were called by the Master and immediately rose to obey. Suppose St. Peter had stumbled and broken

his neck; he would have died a "follower of Christ." Not the man he was thirty years afterwards when he had become a "full grown man in Christ Jesus," but a follower still, and saved from the very moment his resolution was taken.

The resolution was sudden; the after life a slow process. The one a thought; the other the summing up of deeds. In the resolution the seed is planted; in the life the seed grows to ripeness and the harvest. Conversion twofold: "change of mind" giving directness to the new life begun, *and* "change of heart" resulting from a change in the manner of living.

We are aware that this teaching is not in sympathy with popular preaching, and that the popular pulpit of the day has demanded of its hearers a change of character as sudden as the resolution taken. And strange to say, many hearers have met the demand and professed such a conversion. We believe this teaching to be as dangerous as it is untrue. The sadness of many a life may be traced back to the false start involved in this false teaching. Entering the Church is like enlisting in the army. He makes the best soldier who so believes the righteousness of the cause for which the army is raised as to *fight* for it to

the death, trusting to learn the drill at odd times and as the days go by: "Be thou faithful unto death."

If what we have said be true, then the Holy Scripture should be ready to give clear answers regarding an experience that must enter every Christian life; and to the Holy Scripture we appeal for an answer that shall be final. Whether we heed her voice or not, the Church has spoken. Her teaching is clear, distinct and persistent. Every service contains the same instruction, the same definition of the term. Though we heed not the teaching, we cannot misunderstand what the Church has to say on the subject of conversion.

What saith the Scripture?

We approach a favored battle-ground. Already we hear the challenge: "Was not Paul converted?" Did it ever strike you how familiarly we make reference to these sacred characters of Holy Scripture, as though we spoke of Dick and Fred and Pete of the modern playground? "Was not Paul's conversion sudden? Did he not remember just where he was, and with whom he was, and the hour of the day?"

Yes, all this is true. St. Paul passed through just such an experience, and we believe that it may be safely said that of the many sermons

preached to-day on the subject of conversion, a very large number find their text in St. Paul's life and experience.

Let it be further borne in mind that these sermons are usually addressed to what are called "ungodly men"; men of evil thought and life; drinking and lustful men; impure men, whose language is the oath. Before such men is "Paul's" experience held up, and they are bidden in "Paul" to find an example of Christian conversion.

Why, who was this "Paul"? Was "Paul" a drunkard? Was "Paul" noted on the streets of Jerusalem as a defamer of God's holy name and word? Was "Paul" a man of questionable habits?

It does seem to us that the time has come for an answer to such questions, if St. Paul is to be held up as a type of the twentieth century conversion.

In his day, St. Paul stood without a peer. Eighteen hundred years attest the character of his mind. As a moralist, he defied his bitterest foes to discover defect in his character;—"As touching the Law I am blameless." Though Jews, his family had been declared Roman citizens as a special honor. He had sat at Gamaliel's feet. St. Paul had no equal in his day. Neither honor nor wealth, neither

position nor character was wanting. And yet, he pushed all these aside, counting as nothing what men most value, in order that he might, untrammeled, devote himself to the service of the living God; *and he was not yet converted!*

The unconverted Saul of Tarsus, afterwards St. Paul the apostle, a Pharisee of the Pharisees; "as touching the law, blameless"; without a peer in his day; was best known in the city of Jerusalem as a child of the temple and a servant of the God of his fathers.

Can this be said of the men of to-day, before whom "Paul's" experience is portrayed as an example of what they must expect in their lives? The only unmanly thing Saul ever did was done in the name and in the supposed service of God;—he bound women with chains.

There had risen about Jerusalem an increasing sect of people whom Saul thought were seeking to destroy the law of Moses and hence, in his mind, a sect of people who were enemies to the law of God. It was to bring these supposed law-breakers to Jerusalem that Saul was now on his way to Damascus. There was nothing the matter with Saul's moral character. Saul's *heart was all right.* What he needed was light; and as he traveled, at mid-

day, there shone a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, and out of the light a voice: "Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou Me?" It was a voice familiar to Saul; a voice but lately heard upon the streets of Jerusalem and in the service of the temple; the voice of One whom Saul thought was a crucified felon, a dead Jew;—the voice of Jesus of Nazareth; God manifest in the flesh; God speaking from the heavens,

And Saul Changed His Mind.

This was Saul's conversion. Saul did not serve God one whit better after his conversion than he did before he was converted, though after his conversion his service was more wisely rendered. Let us ask (and will the question be pondered?) can this be said of the ordinary man of to-day to whom the necessity of conversion is preached, the experience of Saul being taken as an example? This is another question that answers itself.

St. Paul's conversion was a "change of mind" pure and simple, and therefore every attendant circumstance was remembered, as is natural under every like condition.

There are few men, even in our own day, who cannot lay their hand upon a certain time, detailing all the attendant circumstances

too, when they either did or else knew that they should think differently of Jesus of Nazareth. There is nothing marvelous about this. The wonderful thing about St. Paul's experience was not his conversion, of which he made so little and modern preaching makes so much, but God's gracious way of enlightening His servant. And yet we are bold to believe that if more of us would follow Saul's example *before* his conversion, more of us might look for Saul's experience at his conversion.

The truth is St. Paul's case does not bear on the subject of conversion as popularly preached. It answers in its *suddenness*, and its suddenness proves it not to be a moral change. St. Paul is a clear impersonation of the one side of conversion, a change of mind, where the moral character is not involved.

There is in the Scripture another character which will abundantly show forth the other side of conversion. "A certain man," said the Master, "had two sons. And the younger said to his father give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." It is not difficult to picture this younger son at home; such have hundreds of boys had since the Master spoke and before.

Not many days after, this younger boy gathers all together and seeks a far country.

The country was *far* and hence not reached in a moment. It was *gradually* approached and finally reached as the result of much travel. Each step taking the boy nearer the far country bore him farther from his home. Each step was a downward one; from good to bad; from bad to worse.

We are not led to believe that there was any *sudden* change here beyond the "change of mind" which resulted in the boy's resolution to leave his home. His wanderings were slow, and gradually his heart was changing; changing for the worse; growing, not in grace but, in a knowledge of that world from whose contaminating influences a father's care had guarded him; being *converted* from the home-life of an obedient, loving son to a wayward, self-willed, wandering boy. This too is conversion; this passing from good to bad, just as real as a conversion that leads from bad to good.

At length the younger son reaches the far off country. His new made friends gather about him and linger, so long as his possessions last. His life of dissipation is thorough and brief, and ere long he comes to hunger and want. In the midst of rags and dirt and anguish of soul he comes to himself. "How many hired servants of my father's have bread

enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father."

Here is the resolution; the "change of mind," and it is a true conversion so far as the determination is concerned;—sudden and real. No doubt this younger son could remember the time of the day, the surroundings of his life and his companions. He had been feeding swine and he did not forget the fact, though his reference to the fact would scarcely be regarded as boastful.

"I will arise and go to my father": here is a resolution clearly made. His mind is changed and a new direction is given to effort. A new motive enters as a controlling principle of action. So far as his mind is concerned, he is a changed man. His mind was once set on leaving home; it is now set on returning to his home. But the resolution to rise and go did not take him to his father and his home. Having resolved, he must *go*. Action must follow the resolution. He must rise and make the effort to retrace his steps; he must turn his face homeward and then follow whither he looked.

It must also be noted that when the boy finally reached his father's house, though welcomed and feasted, he is not the same boy he was when he gathered together his portion of

goods and began his wayward course. His resolution to return home was suddenly taken: this was a change of mind, and he has acted on it. Now a gradual change in the moral character begins. Bad habits must be reformed; passions yielded to must be restrained and controlled; lessons of purity and reverence and obedience must be learned over again. This is the work of restoration; the recovery of the moral character; the "change of heart," and this is and must be a gradual process: a growth, first the blade, then the ear and then the full corn in the ear.

> Roses break not forth from hard ungraceful wood:
> Nature fringes first the twig and then appears the bud.

The prodigal boy was his father's son even in his wanderings. That father's house was the boy's home by virtue of his sonship. The return was a welcome one at any time the boy so resolved. His resolution and the father's readiness to welcome him were involved in one act. The home was waiting the boy's return all the while he wandered. He did not have to make the home, nor to create the relationship that made him a member of the household. His wandering did not destroy the home nor did it change the relationship between him and his father. The boy had

left his home and his father, and all that was needed, so far as he was concerned, was to retrace his steps. The father and the home had remained just as they were before he took his departure.

This sudden awakening of the prodigal boy is one side of conversion, the sinner's resolve, "I will arise and go to my father; I will serve the Lord." But this resolution must go a step further and issue in action. Having resolved to rise, we must make the effort to rise; having resolved to go, we must try to go; having resolved to serve the Lord, we must endeavor to serve Him. The boy's return to his former self and his moral restoration mark the result of many an effort, many a failure. This is the other side of conversion; the renewal of the moral character, and this must be a *gradual* process.

Hence do we conclude the Church's consistency. The Church teaches that conversion signifies a change and that change is twofold.

First, "change of mind" and consequent alteration in the manner of living. This evinces a man's resolution and determination. He is a son returning to his home, and already there is joy in the presence of the angels of God. The man is saved because, heeding the

voice of the Holy Spirit, he has accepted salvation. This is sudden, and

Second, change of character, or "change of heart," if one prefers the expression, as the result of change of mind and manner of life. This is growth in grace and this, like any other growth, must be gradual.

Every man must make a start. No one can form a resolution for another, nor for another change that other's mind. Each must do this for himself. Nor should any wait until he becomes some one or something else or other than just what he is. We must make the start as we are. We must, each for himself, choose whom we will serve and having chosen, we must be faithful in the service all the days of our life.

Never mind the past. We may have lived very wrong lives; we may be very weak and conscious of our weakness and our unworthiness. Never mind that. Our blessed Lord invites us: "Come unto Me all ye that travail and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "Follow Me," are the marching orders and if we will but heed them, starting with the humility of the first disciples, we shall with them, after we have suffered awhile, enter into our rest.

We shall not be misunderstood, nor shall the

Church's estimate of life be underrated. In all that has been said we have not forgotten that, known to all Christian people, there are individual experiences to-day that bear a close semblance to those of early times. We do not forget that there are many actual sudden conversions which are neither only nor mainly acts or decisions of the mind: but rather the sudden advent of a new consciousness of realities before unrealized, bringing with it a flow of new feelings and experience. The Church neither denies nor ignores these, but the rather rejoices in them. Still are they exceptional and individual experiences which should not be worked up and waited for from God as a precondition of the Christian life and required to be furnished by all who seek entrance into God's family. The teaching of the Church does not carry a denial of such individual experiences, but only a protest against prescribing and requiring these as universal and necessary experiences in every Christian life. The Church welcomes as a gracious fact every individual visitation of the Spirit of God: but to teach that we should all wait and look for such experiences will inevitably lead to their manufacture and counterfeit, and this in the end produces a spirit of professions and cant and unreality, contradicting all the sincerity and

earnestness with which it originated. The Church insists that all that can be *required* of all, and that is *in the power* of all is (1) the making up of the mind, the decision, to serve God as His child; and (2) the serving Him,—the one instantaneous and the other lifelong, and eternity-long.

Chapter VII

LAYING ON OF HANDS OR THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

As Seen in the Holy Scripture

(The "Book of Common Prayer," p. 273)

LET us suppose that the mind has been made up and the resolution has been taken. Under one influence or another: it may be under some man's preaching: it may be through the less marked influence of a friend;—one is aroused by severe illness; another by a merciful providence midst great dangers, for God works in many ways.

Let us suppose that one has resolved, from henceforth I will serve God and be numbered with His people: my influence shall be thrown on the side of the right. The real value and earnestness of such a resolution find their test in the endeavor to make a change in the manner of living. Evil companionships must be dropped: places of improper resort must be forsaken: a watch must be placed over the besetting sin: the old life must be pushed behind and the face must be set like flint towards the attainment of a higher life.

Let us suppose that this resolution has been made: the same old question rises again that has been asked for eighteen hundred years and will be asked to the end: "What shall I do?" It was asked on the day of Pentecost; it was on St. Paul's lips the very moment he was enlightened, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And the same answer must be given now as then. There has been no change in the conditions to make the line of duty to-day to differ from the line of duty at the first preaching of the Gospel. Down through the ages has sounded the order: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved:" "Arise and be baptized."

Why be baptized? One reply should be sufficient: The Lord whom you have resolved to follow, and whose disciple you propose to be, commands it. "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of every nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

You have entered upon a life of service: that was what your resolution meant, and the first law of service is obedience. Do what the Master tells you to do. If you have not been baptized, let that be your first step. Preparation for it is simple. A child can understand the requirements, and the ignorant need not

go astray. Do not wait until you are good. Go and be baptized because the Master has pointed this out to you as your first duty. Had you been brought up as a child in the Church you would have been baptized in infancy, as you were born in infancy; and as a child you would have been taught as you grew up what your Church duties were, just as you were taught as a child your ordinary home duties.

We suppose then that you have been baptized:—is anything else required to be done, beyond and as an aid to the individual and personal life which every Christian must strive to live? For an answer to this question we must go to the same Scripture that has already instructed us in regard to our baptism.

The Master said, "Whosoever will confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father in heaven." Let it be clearly noted: the Master did not say whosoever will "profess religion," but whosoever will confess Me. Between a profession and a confession there is a wide difference that should suggest itself to the mind that thinks.

Had the Master stopped with these words, our service might have been a secret one and our private devotions would have attested our obedience. But the Master continues, "who-

soever will confess Me *before men*." Hence our confession must be public. He promises a like public confession of us hereafter.

Again, had the Master stopped with the words quoted, we would be free to choose our own *method* of making the confession. Any method is as good as any other method, *provided* no method is prescribed.

One might go on the top of a house and proclaim aloud his acknowledgment of Christ, and that would be proper and right,—*provided* no method had been given. One might crawl on his hands and knees down the middle of the main street of a crowded city, and to questions asked make answer that this is his public confession of Christ before men: this too would be proper and right,—*provided* no other method had been ordered. One might, in the presence of a large congregation, go to the mourner's bench, or give his hand to a preacher or some friend in token of a public acknowledgment of his Christian duties, and this too would be right and proper,—*provided* he has not been told to follow another and a certain other method.

But if He who issued the command that we should confess Him before men has also dictated the *method* through which He wishes that command to be obeyed, then it strikes us

that the *method becomes a part of the command*, and may be departed from only where it cannot be followed. Certainly omitting an *ordered* method, or replacing it by another that has no authority, becomes a serious step.

We must need, then, go to the Scripture and make an examination of this matter. We must there seek instruction in regard to methods of carrying out the orders that have been issued. If we find no directions in the Holy Scripture, we shall be free to follow our own method. If, however, in the Holy Bible the *method* is laid down as well as the command, we see not how we are to carry out our resolution of serving the Lord save by doing, not only what He has commanded but also by doing it *in the way* He has seen fit to determine.

It is well to have clearly defined in our minds what we should expect by a study of the Holy Scripture. Many have made fatal error just here, vainly looking in the Holy Scripture for that for which the Holy Scripture was not written. Should we, regarding the question now to be investigated, open the Scripture expecting a definite statement, "Thou shalt do thus and so," we would be disappointed. There is no book in the New Testament in which we will find a detailed instruction for what shall be done in the Church,

for the simple reason that the Scripture was not written first and then the Church built upon the instructions therein given. The Church had been doing her work a full generation before the New Testament was written, save the four Gospels which give us the life of our Lord and are not concerned with the work of the Church.

When the books of the New Testament were written they were either addressed *to the Church already doing her work* all over the known world, as in the case of the Epistles; or else they recorded the history of what *had already been done*, as in the case of the Acts of the Apostles. Hence we will not find it written "so and so *shall be* done," as would have been the case had the Scripture been written first and then the Church founded on the directions given. We will rather expect to read "so and so *was* done." This point is of great importance, and it would be well worth your time to study in this connection the contrast between the books of the Old and the New Testament in this regard. What is written *before* the event took place is explicit in its directions; what is written after the event has taken place respects the familiarity of those to whom it is addressed.

The Acts of the Apostles, written about the

year A. D. 64 (our Lord ascended in the year 33), opens with the statement that our Lord remained with His disciples forty days after His resurrection, "teaching them the things concerning the kingdom of God." Immediately after the ascension we find the disciples engaged in a matter of Church government, filling the place of Judas and thus increasing the number of the apostles. This writing is a matter of record, made a generation *after* the deed was done, and the record concerns that which was already perfectly well known to the large body of Christian folk then living.

The Church regards this as one of the things in which the Master left His instructions, though no detailed command is expressed. The importance of the act is in the *fact that it was done.* Other matters of like import are recorded as things done, as the change from the Jewish Sabbath to the Lord's Day; the admission of women to the holy communion, though for none of these can a direct command be found. But these need not now detain us: we are looking not after Church government, but for guidance regarding our own personal duty.

So far as the record guides us, the gospel was preached for the first time on the Day of Pentecost. We cannot go wrong in expecting

to find on that occasion and at that time an indication of the *life that should be led*, and of the *duty that should be performed* by each one who accepted the message. St. Peter, one of the apostles, is the preacher, and herein is the official character of the ministry recognized. The sermon is a remarkable one in that it is *free* from all that marks what is to-day called a "Gospel sermon." St. Peter rises before a multitude with the declared purpose of preaching the Gospel and with the plain hope of winning some to faith in Christ; and his sermon consists in a repetition of what is to-day known as "the Apostles' Creed." It would be well for you to study that sermon with this thought in mind. You can number the Creed in that first sermon, article by article. There is no exhortation; there is no excitement, save that created by an unsympathizing crowd which the speaker quiets. The apostle repeats the Creed and when he has finished his sermon he makes the startling announcement that he, with the rest of the apostles, is a witness to the truth of what he has said; and that those who have heard must either believe the testimony, or else they must upset the credibility of the witnesses.

Accepting the truth of the statements made, "the multitude said unto Peter and the rest of

the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then said Peter unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Herein do we find a plain direction as to what they should do, and as plainly written a promise that having so done they, "every one of you," would "receive a gift." Whatever this gift may or may not mean, we shall ask you to keep the fact in mind for the time being. We shall have occasion to refer to St. Peter's words later on. Such a sentence, spoken at such a time and under such circumstances, could not have been without meaning, and should not be lightly dealt with by those who are honestly seeking to do their duty as Christian men.

In the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles at the fifth verse we find these words: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. . . . Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who when they were come down, prayed for them,

that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

This is a very simple story and is told very much as though it were an every-day occurrence. It records a transaction as a matter of course: a matter of every-day happening. And yet Samaria is some twenty miles and more from Jerusalem. There were no railroads in those days and no conveniences of travel. Those two apostles must either walk the distance or ride on a donkey, and this fact emphasizes, to our mind, the importance of the mission that took Sts. Peter and John to Samaria. It tells that they must go to do what Philip, who was already in Samaria, could not do. Let us go with them and see what they did. Whatever they went to do involved *all of the apostles.*

"Who when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost." (How strangely that reminds us of the promise of St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:28). "For as yet He had fallen on none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

"Only they were baptized." That was

Philip's work, and that is where we stand to-day; we have been baptized. There is in this record the indication of another and an additional service, called the "Laying on of hands," which was performed not by Philip, but by the apostles. This service was performed upon those who had been baptized, and by the apostles, with the declared purpose of conveying an additional grace, the "Gift of the Holy Ghost."

Let us now turn to the nineteenth chapter of the same book. St. Paul, another apostle, goes to Ephesus and finding certain disciples asks, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Again, we are reminded of St. Peter's promise on the Day of Pentecost.

If by this question, asked of a mixed multitude at Ephesus, the inspired apostle meant to inquire if they, or any of them, had received the extraordinary power to work a miracle; to raise the dead or to give sight to the blind, we are unable to understand why the question need be asked. Surely those upon whom this extraordinary power had been bestowed were sufficiently well known. The sacred Scriptures tell of many miracles and in every case the worker stands out a prominent figure. This power used by Philip had attracted very general attention. Had the gaining of *this*

information been the purpose of the apostle, the question would seem a strange one. It will be noted, referring again to the sermon on the Day of Pentecost, that the promise then made was a *general one* and that it was held out to all who would accept the Gospel: "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off." It should be clear that the promise, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," applies to us to-day who are afar off just as truly as does the command, "Repent and be baptized." It is all one sentence, without break or limitation. Hence we conclude that St. Peter could not have had in his mind when preaching on the Day of Pentecost a "gift of the Holy Ghost" that carried with it the wonder working power of a miracle, for the power to work miracles was restricted and not imparted to all, even in New Testament times.

In this same line, St. Paul's question is perfectly general. He speaks to a multitude, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" The question is a very matter of fact one, and suggests that they should have so received the gift of the Holy Ghost as a matter of course, just as they should have repented and been baptized. It hardly seems possible that this apostle could here have made

reference to the power of working a miracle, for St. Paul is the one writer who particularly emphasizes the fact that all have not these extraordinary gifts (see 1 Cor. 12, closing verses).

St. Paul meets a multitude of disciples at Ephesus. His purpose here is the same that he evinces wherever he goes: he purposes to instruct them, and for that reason he inquires into their history; what they have been taught, and how far they have advanced in their Christian duties. We think for the present that nothing more can be made of this visit of St. Paul to the disciples at Ephesus.

Now let us turn again to the visit of St. Peter and St. John to Samaria (Acts 8: 17). "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost is given by the laying on of hands. To ask, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost" is to ask "Have ye received the laying on of hands." The same question is asked to-day and has been asked ever since the apostles' time, whenever a clergyman instructs a congregation: "Have ye been confirmed?"

This is all the more plain in the visit to Ephesus, for immediately upon the information given that they had not even received Christian baptism, St. Paul baptizes them, and the record continues, "And when Paul had laid

his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them."

Hence we conclude that there was a service practiced among the apostles which supplemented baptism; that it was a service intended for all; a service through which a blessing, known as "the gift of the Holy Ghost," was imparted. This service was called "The Laying On of Hands." Wherever a record of this service is made in the Scripture, it always follows baptism, and the service is always administered by an apostle.

Let us not be too hasty in drawing conclusions as to the *permanency* of customs, even though practiced by the apostles. There are many instances in which the laying on of hands is not mentioned at all. We think we find a plain reference to this service in St. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, as already indicated. But in the case of St. Paul's baptism, as in the visit of St. Peter to the Roman Centurion, the record is silent, and while we may not say the service *was* held where no reference is made to it, no more can we say it was *not* held. We have found this custom practiced and this service performed by the apostles on certain occasions, and this is all we have found so far.

If the service of the laying on of hands was

only a custom, even though we can trace its frequent practice to the apostles, we shall see nothing in it to justify the conclusion, that such a custom was to remain in the Church as a service supplementing holy baptism, and marking a public ratification of Church membership, and therefore the *permanent* Scriptural method of making a public confession of Christ before men. Customs may belong to one age and not to another. Many Apostolic customs have passed away; such as wearing sandals; washing each other's feet, and giving the holy kiss, to which frequent reference is made in the epistles. If the laying on of hands was *only* such a custom, we see no reason to suppose that it may not pass away as other customs certainly have.

We go a step further and affirm that the references to the laying on of hands in the Acts of the Apostles do *not* afford ground for supposing that the service was more than a pious custom; nor did we quote these passages for other reason than to show the *practice*, and that this service was a customary one in the time of the apostles. If this much is granted, it is all that we here contend for, and we believe that so far all Christian people will agree with us. We candidly affirm that if this is all the Scripture has to

say on the subject of the laying on of hands, the Church has no right to claim Scriptural authority for the *continuance* of the service; nor has the Church the right to insist upon the rite of the laying on of hands as though it were a matter of importance in the Christian life.

And yet this is exactly the claim the Church makes. The Church not only claims that the laying on of hands was practiced among the apostles, and has been practiced in the Church ever since the time of the apostles, but that there is the clearest Scriptural authority not only declaring the importance of the rite, but also that this rite was intended to remain a permanent institution. The Church claims that confirmation, or the laying on of hands, is the Scriptural method of making a public confession of Christ before men; that it is the ratification of the vows of holy baptism, and that in this service the Holy Spirit is given today as when the apostles lived and went about laying their hands upon those who had been baptized.

We asked to be followed to the end of this line of thought, and that judgment be not hastily formed for or against the conclusions herein suggested. We deal with a serious subject and we shall deal with it candidly. We

believe in Church unity, and confirmation is one of the dividing lines between the Church and the bodies of Christian people about us. If the Scripture is not as clear for the *continuance* of this service of the laying on of hands, as it is clear in declaring its early practice among the apostles, then we shall say, away with the service of confirmation and grant to men the liberty of having any service they may desire, and any method for the confession of Christ they may see fit to practice. We do not know that we can state this side of the question any more strongly and we shall remain consistent with that statement.

Bearing in mind that we have found the custom of laying on of hands in the Acts of the Apostles, we seek to know if this was *only* a custom.

Let us turn to St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. The sixth chapter opens with these words: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ." A "principle" is not a mere custom. A principle is not something that may belong to one age and not to another. The very essence of a principle is its *continuance* and its permanency. In the erection of a building you are at liberty to choose the material; it may be of mud, or logs, or plank, or stone. But whatever be the material, you

may not alter one *principle* of construction. A mechanical principle may not be changed nor may anything else be substituted therefor. A principle is an element that enters a compound or a mixture in such a way that wherever the compound or mixture is found that element will be found also. The air we now breathe is a mixture; made up of certain accidents and certain principles. The amount of dust in the air is an accident. It may be more or less; if the air is pure there will be no dust. The oxygen in the air is a principle. Go where you will; on top of a mountain, or at the bottom of a cave, and the air you breathe will always contain oxygen. This must be so because oxygen is a *principle* of the air. Suppose from the air you extract the oxygen; you have remaining the other elements or principles, but you have no air. The reason is simple; you have withdrawn a principle and the mixture is destroyed. If you care to imagine the remaining elements holding together you may call it air if you will, but it will not sustain life.

Now this is the word St. Paul is using. Let us read him again: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation." A "foundation" surely cannot be an

accident. A foundation cannot be necessary for a building at one time and not necessary at another. A foundation cannot be regarded in any manner a mere *custom* of construction. If you would in any age destroy a building you need not trouble yourself about the shingles or the outside ornaments. Uproot the foundation or even disturb its consistency, and the building will fall just as surely as you lay a destroying hand upon the foundation. If you ask, why is this so; the answer is plain: The foundation is that upon which the building rests, and hence the *foundation* is a permanent necessity.

If St. Paul had searched the language in which he wrote for the strongest words to convey the idea of *importance* and *permanency*, he could not have chosen better than he did. He says that the doctrine of Christ is made up of certain principles; and then to make the thought he was trying to convey even more plain, he changes the figure and declares that these *principles* are the foundation of the doctrine of Christ. Hence we cannot avoid the conclusion that St. Paul is not talking of "passing customs," but of those things which must be found in the Church always and wherever the gospel of Christ is preached and followed.

Let us read the verse again and count as we read: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works (that is one), and of faith towards God (that is two), the doctrine of baptisms (that is three), and the laying on of hands (that is four), and the resurrection of the dead (that is five), and of eternal judgment (that is six)."

St. Paul says that there are six principles of the doctrine of Christ and that they are the foundation upon which that doctrine rests. St. Paul says that there are six; who says five? To say five is to *omit* one. Which shall it be? Surely if a liberty is to be taken with instruction so plainly given in the Holy Scripture, some authority should be pointed out justifying that liberty. If one man may omit one such principle, another man may omit another. Suppose, allowing my neighbor the liberty of omitting the laying on of hands, I should exercise a like liberty and omit repentance, or faith, or baptism, or resurrection, or the judgment:—plainly I have destroyed the doctrine of Christ so far as I am concerned. The gospel of Christ cannot be truly preached or truly believed where repentance or faith or baptism or the resurrection or the judgment is omitted.

The thing preached ceases to be the doctrine of Christ when out of it any one of these is taken, for these be the principles of that peculiar doctrine. St. Paul does not intimate that any one of these is more important than another. The apostle simply says that these *six* are the principles of the doctrine of Christ. By what possible right, we ask, may any one of them be omitted? We do not believe that any thoughtful person will justify the act upon the ground that in his judgment these things are not of sufficient importance to be seriously considered; and if not this, we ask again, by what possible right can we omit any one of these from our personal Christian life?

Another line will give this thought point and manifest its importance. There is not a body of Christian people in existence that would not be justly scandalized, and that would not rise as an equipped army were it seriously charged that under its teaching repentance or faith was not required on the part of its adult members. These are universally held as *necessary* upon the part of people who have come to years of discretion. Let it be asked why repentance and faith are held to be necessary, and the answer is given, "because repentance and faith are *principles* of the doctrine of Christ." Who says so? St. Paul.

Where does St. Paul so teach? In the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews. But St. Paul, who makes this declaration, says *in the same sentence* and with equal emphasis that the laying on of hands is a principle of the same doctrine. If one half of the sentence is so faithfully read and its teaching is so universally adhered to, on what possible ground may the other half of the same sentence be disregarded?

We are reminded that there are those who have made the experiment of omitting one or more of these principles, and we are also conscious of the woful consequence. Whence comes the immoral man; the man of impure life and habit; the man whose home is in the grog shop and whose companionships are sought in the lower walks of life? He is a man easily accounted for: he has said, I will accept the principles of the doctrine of Christ, provided *I am permitted to omit one:* I do not believe the necessity of "repentance,"—and hence has resulted the life of immorality. And the infidel: what has made him a possibility? He has said with the other, I will accept the principles of the doctrine of Christ, provided *I am permitted to omit one:* "faith" shall find no place in my life,—and hence the unbeliever and the infidel. And whence comes the Quaker? Starting with the omission of

Christian "baptism" he has cast aside all forms of worship, and hence the Quaker. And how shall we account for the materialist? One has said, I will accept the principles of the doctrine of Christ, provided *I may omit the one of my preference:* I do not believe "the resurrection of the dead"; and hence the materialist. And there is another still who sees no difference between duty done and duty undone, and who denies that even virtue has its reward. This one says, I will accept the principles of the doctrine of Christ, provided *I may have the same privilege that is claimed by a large part of the world, and exercised by some who are Christians;* provided that I may omit the one principle I prefer to omit: such an one denies "the judgment" to come, and you have the Universalist.

There is not a false teaching that has cast its black mark on Christian thought that did not have its rise in, and that may not be accounted for, by the omission of one of the "principles of the doctrine of Christ," as laid down by the apostle. We ask pardon for the question, for to it we can find no answer: Why should the omission of one of these principles be faulted more than the omission of another?

Let us go a step further, for candor does not

permit us to stop short of a full consideration. If "the laying on of hands" is a principle of the doctrine of Christ: and if these lamentable results have followed the omission of one or other of these principles; and if the bodies of Christian people, in dropping the laying on of hands, have omitted another such principle, it should be evident that like hurtful results have followed this omission, as they have clearly followed the omission of repentance, faith, baptism, the resurrection and the judgment. We believe that this is one of the sad facts over which the earnest Christian heart weeps to-day. We ask the reader to account for divided Christendom. How did this come about? Surely nothing has so cursed the Church from its foundation, and must continue to curse it, as the divisions within its own ranks; the lifting of one altar against another. We ask you to account for the fact of the multiplicity of so-called churches. History will speak to the point, and her writing is very new and very fresh. Confirmation, or the laying on of hands, has always been administered by the bishop; so long as the laying on of hands was accepted as a "principle of the doctrine of Christ," the bishop's office was left unimpaired and its functions were respected. For sixteen hundred years the Church

of God was undivided. Go where you may and wherever you make inquiry you always find the Church. The names we hear to-day as designating certain religious sects were unknown three hundred years ago. It was the Church in or of England: the Church in or of Rome: the Church in the East. Differences of opinion existed, but the Church was one. Three hundred years ago, men began to tamper with the ministry. That ministry had always been threefold,—bishops, priests and deacons. Confirmation, or the laying on of hands, was one of the duties of the bishop, and when the bishop was pushed aside and men invented another ministry, one of the functions of the order of bishop was lost. The sectarian mind said, I will accept the principles of the doctrine of Christ, provided *I may omit the laying on of hands*, and as an immediate result we have a divided Christendom.

Of the Six Principles of the Doctrine of Christ enumerated by St. Paul (Heb. 6: 1, 2), five involve the personal duty and relationship of the *individual* Christian. Repentance, and Faith, and Baptism; belief in the Resurrection of the dead, and Eternal Judgment, are of personal application. Denial of any one of these can affect *only the individual.* These five have been generally accepted as principles

of the doctrine of Christ, and hence personal Christianity is found among all bodies of Christian people.

Of these principles of the Doctrine of Christ, the laying on of hands is the only one that involves of necessity the *official character of the minister*, and hence the laying on of hands involves Church government, and therefore Church unity. The principle of the Doctrine of Christ that involves *corporate* Christianity, namely the laying on of hands, having been omitted by our sectarian brethren, breach of Church unity has followed of necessity.

It seems to us that this suggests a very serious question for consideration, and one with which no thoughtful Christian man can lightly deal. St. Paul says there are six principles of the doctrine of Christ, and among them St. Paul mentions "the laying on of hands." For this reason the Church has ever maintained and practiced this rite, just as she has maintained the necessity of accepting the remaining five as principles, of the same doctrine. For this reason the Church has always insisted that her children, so soon as they have reached years of discretion and can answer for themselves, shall present themselves for the Church's blessing in confirmation, as the Scriptural

method of making their public confession before men of their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, there can be no accident in St. Paul's arrangement of these principles: they are in couplets.

First, Repentance and faith;
This is man's part.
Second, Baptism and the laying on of hands;
These are God's institutions.
Third, The resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment;
These belong to the next world.

St. Paul's summing up of the principles of the doctrine of Christ throws a new light on the early passages of Scripture which we have already considered, and removes from them all doubt and question. It is plainly seen now why the apostles went about "laying their hands" on those who had been baptized. The act was not a mere *custom*, but a principle of the doctrine which they were sent to preach, and by the apostles this rite was administered as the divine method of making a public confession of Christ before men. Hence the visit to Samaria and to Ephesus was an official one, and the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed," was the natural question to ask in determining who were look-

ing forward to that service through which the Holy Ghost was given.

This is what the Scripture has to say regarding the laying on of hands, and this is the reason the Church has always declined either to omit the rite, or to substitute any other in its place. Just as the apostles in their day, so now the bishops go about from city to city confirming those who have received Christian baptism.

But to the mind of some a difficulty is here suggested. Wherever the apostles administered the laying on of hands there was the gift of the Holy Ghost: does that gift accompany the like service when administered by the bishops of the Church to-day? We think so: certainly the Church so teaches, and we also think that a brief consideration of this question will manifest abundant proof that there is no essential difference between the administration of the laying on of hands to-day and when the apostles were on the earth. The rite is the same and the blessing accompanying the administration of the rite is the same now as then.

The difficulty arises not from the Church's teaching but from the want of a correct use of words on the part of those who misunderstand the Church. We believe that God's Holy

Spirit is given to-day in connection with the administration of the rite of confirmation, but we do not believe that therefore those who are confirmed and receive the gift have the power to work a miracle; nor do we believe that this power is contemplated in the language of the Scripture when speaking on this subject.

Bear in mind that there is in the Scripture a broad distinction drawn between the extraordinary *manifestation* of the Spirit and the ordinary *fruit* of the Spirit. We are clearly taught that the extraordinary manifestation of the Spirit in the working of miracles was not a general gift. The closing verses of the twelfth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians plainly declare this fact. It is further set forth in the Scripture that these extraordinary manifestations were given for a present purpose, attesting the divine mission of the first witnesses; the same to continue in the Church only until time should afford ordinary proof that these men were sent of God. Then the extraordinary shall give place to the ordinary. St. Paul clearly states that the power to work a miracle shall not last: "Whether there be tongues, they shall *cease;* whether there be knowledge, it shall *vanish away.*" These are the terms he had just employed to describe the power of working miracles.

There is another gift of the Holy Spirit to which a stronger and a bolder emphasis is given in the Scripture, and this shall be bestowed upon *every one* and *shall last to all time* as the sign of true discipleship;—not the extraordinary manifestation of the Spirit in raising the dead or giving sight to the blind, but "the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5 : 22; also Eph. 5 : 9). Turning to the closing verses of 1 Cor. 12, St. Paul is speaking of miracles and he uses these words, "But covet earnestly the best gifts. And yet I show unto you a more excellent way." More excellent than what? Than raising the dead; than foretelling the future; than speaking with tongues, for of these he was just speaking: in a word more excellent than working miracles. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

This is certainly most remarkable language, and such as we would not have dared quote, so far is it removed from modern thought on the

subject, save that the writing is of inspired authority. St. Paul says that there is something more excellent and more to be desired than the power to work a miracle. He calls it charity, and lest any should misunderstand him, supposing, as men do now suppose, that charity consists in giving something away, he adds: "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Let us examine the apostle's definition of charity. "Charity suffereth long, is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity but in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." St. Paul is describing the personal characteristics of Christian people which are as clearly seen to-day as when St. Paul wrote these words. The marks which life's experience has stamped upon our Christian mothers are the marks of that charity which St. Paul says is the more excellent way. "The fruit of the Spirit" clearly seen in the Christian character to-day is the "Gift of the Holy Ghost," bestowed by the laying on of the bishop's hands. A gift

that is none the less real because it is subject to the law of growth: none the less precious because we must develop it by daily exercise: a gift that was foretold by the prophet Isaiah (11:2, 3), and which the Church has defined in the prayer which she requires the bishop to use immediately before the rite of confirmation is performed: "Strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost, the comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and forever" (Prayer Book, p. 275). This is what the Church understands by the gift of the Holy Ghost, and this is the gift which she believes God bestows upon those who, in obedience to His will, endeavor to do what He requires; and who submitting to the command, accept the method laid down in the Scriptures.

But we are again reminded that there are many bodies of Christian people who have omitted this principle of the doctrine of Christ. Does the Church teach that these Christians are without God's Holy Spirit? By no means. We are not studying God's mercy in man's

neglect, nor may we limit His mercy. The Church passes no judgment upon others. They stand before their own Master, and no judgment may be passed upon them.

We were endeavoring to set forth the Church's reason for maintaining within her own borders the service known as confirmation, or the laying on of hands. We have found that service set down in the Scripture as one of the principles of the doctrine of Christ and of constant practice among the apostles; we assert the uninterrupted continuance of that service in the Church for sixteen hundred years; we assert that there is not a word in the Scripture justifying the displacement of the service of the laying on of hands; we assert that not one of the services that in modern use have been substituted for this can be traced in the word of God. The Church having received this treasure of truth in trust, dares not vary from it; dares not be faithless to the trust.

That God has blessed the earnest lives of His children, even those who have wandered away from home, no one doubts. But we cannot therefore believe that they have been blessed *because* of their neglect, but rather *in spite* of it. We believe they would have been the more blessed had they with the same

earnestness of life not departed from the "principles of the doctrine of Christ." That the bodies of Christian people about us have omitted a principle cannot be denied; that this departure has resulted in the breaking up of God's family is the cause of universal sorrow to the Christian heart; that the Church has preserved intact the Scriptural teaching in this regard is no ground for boasting. Rather is this latter a reason for thankfulness to God that He has not left Himself without witness in the world, nor His people without a plain way of confessing Him before men and receiving His blessing and strength to perform faithfully the duties which that confession declares to be theirs.

"Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace; that he may continue Thine forever; and daily increase in the Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto Thy everlasting kingdom. Amen."

Chapter VIII

PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

What is Required of a Person Who is Desirous to be Confirmed

WE have defined conversion as a two-fold change: first, a change of the mind, whereby new resolutions are formed; second, a change of the heart resulting from an honest effort to be true to the resolutions formed.

In the Christian life as in any other a man must make up his mind as to what he proposes to do; must choose whom he will serve. This is a matter of the will by which one determines to turn to the right or to the wrong. Having made a choice, the life must be lived consistently with the choice made. As a result of changing the manner of living, a corresponding change will be wrought in the moral character. This result is what the Church means by change of heart. It should be plain that conversion is not merely an experience that comes unsought and under the pressure of excitement, but is rather the conscious act whereby one enlists his life in the service of God.

Conversion to Christianity demands a public confession of Christ before men, and we think that it has been clearly shown that the service of confirmation, or the laying on of hands, is the Scriptural method of making that confession. Let us now ask, What manner of preparation is required that one may be ready for confirmation?

St. Paul says we must serve God with the understanding as well as with the spirit. Our service should be a reasonable service. In other words, there are things we should know as well as things we should do.

Turning to the confirmation service, you will find that it opens with these words: "To the end that confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church hath thought good to order, that none shall be confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and can answer to such other questions as in the short Catechism are contained" (Book of Common Prayer, p. 273). This then is our mental preparation. These things we must know.

Why, one is tempted to ask, are we not examined on our knowledge of the Scripture: why are we not required to repeat so many chapters of the New Testament;—perhaps the

sermon on the mount? Why has the Church chosen the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, thus making a special point of these, and requiring them to be known before confirmation is administered?

The answer to these questions lies near the surface. In confirmation we take upon ourselves the promises that were made for us when we were baptized. Confirmation is our conscious acknowledgment of our childhood in the Church and our conscious entrance upon the duties involved in that relationship. Hence when we are confirmed we enter upon a life of *service.* There are certain things we have to do; we have, as children of the Church, certain duties to perform, and in order that we may intelligently perform them we must know what those duties are.

Faith is the first duty we owe to God, and the Christian faith is expressed in the Creed. Hence the Church requires us to learn the Creed.

But faith without works is dead. Our faith must find expression in action. The second duty we owe to God is obedience, and God's law is expressed in the Ten Commandments. Hence we must learn these.

And third, our constant dependence must be upon God. A Christian must be a man of

prayer. Hence we must learn the Lord's prayer, which is the pattern of all prayer.

For these reasons the Church requires us to learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments.

But this is only the mental preparation, and however important it may be, it is but the beginning. The confirmation service goes on, and of those who are to be confirmed the bishop asks, "Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that ye made, or that was made in your name, at your baptism: ratifying and confirming the same; and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which ye then undertook, or your sponsors then undertook for you?" And each one answers for himself, "I do" (Book of Common Prayer, p. 274).

I do what? Make a profession of religion? Not for a moment. I do renew the vows of my baptism; I do ratify those vows; I do acknowledge myself bound by them.

Confirmation is not taking a new step; it is ratifying an old one. When we were baptized certain promises were made for us in the Church, just as our parents assumed certain obligations to the state and the country when we were born. When we come of age, we

must ratify the promises made to the state, and become law abiding citizens; when we come to years of discretion, we must ratify the promises made to the church. Hence the question presses upon us, What shall I do with the promises that were made in my name when I was baptized?

If we desire to ratify them, we are ready for confirmation: and all that is required is the special instruction that will prepare us for that step. It will be noted just here that confirmation is not an act peculiar to the Church. There is not a child in the ordinary home life who does not, on reaching a certain age, accept or turn his back upon his home. The former act is to confirm his birthright. This is the act which in the Church is known as confirmation.

Since confirmation is the ratification of certain promises made in our baptism, the truest preparation must clearly consist in a knowledge of those promises, and the effort to understand to what they bind us.

We shall turn back, then, to the baptismal service and see what was there undertaken (Book of Common Prayer, p. 247).

First, "Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works . . . so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them?" We promise to renounce, not *denounce* the devil. This dis-

tinction is an important one. The one refers specially to ourselves and our demeanor, and the other emphasizes an evil one who is external to ourselves. It is not sufficient for us to go about characterizing the devil and his evil influence. This were an easier task than that imposed upon us when we are baptized.

We promise to renounce the devil, and it is well to have that word clearly defined in our minds. To renounce is to put aside; not to be influenced by; not to associate with; not to be led by. This promise has to do with ourselves and our conduct. We should not imagine that because we have made or renewed this promise that we have therefore put the devil in a corner, or cast a chain about him, so that he will not tempt us again. The promise of our baptism has no bearing on the devil. The question is,—Dost thou renounce? The point of the question is aimed at the action of the person baptized; not at the tempter. The word renounce in the baptismal service has the same meaning as in common usage. When you renounce a friend you do not control *his* movements. He is free to go and to come as he will. He may join you on the streets; you must decide whether or not you will walk with him. He may ring your door bell; it is for you to say whether or not he shall enter

your house and be entertained as a guest. If you have had occasion to renounce a friend, you must break up all association with him. If you have renounced the devil, you must do the same. To tamper with either is to be inconsistent, and to prove that your resolution was not an honest one. The renouncing must be on your part. That the devil will tempt you again and many times over is certain, and perhaps his approaches will be more insidious and persistent after your confirmation than before you were confirmed. It was immediately after the Master's baptism that He was led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The sin is not in the temptation; that is the devil's part, and he will not leave his work undone. Sin is committed when we yield to; are influenced by; associate with; entertain the evil suggestion. This is exactly what we promise not to do when we are baptized, and this is the promise we renew when we are confirmed. We promise to renounce the devil in such a way that we will not follow him. To follow is a conscious act. You cannot follow any one without knowing that you are doing so, and you must do the same of a free and willing mind. The promise is, "I renounce them all, and, by God's help, I will endeavor not to follow nor be led by them."

To be led is another conscious act, and this is the usual form that temptations assume. Sin is made attractive in order that we may be led on to its commission. Go down the streets of any of our large cities after dark. The most brilliantly illuminated buildings are the saloons. From them sweet strains of music reach the ear. The idea is to allure and lead into wrong-doing. We have promised, "I will not be led."

Would you know what that means? Cast a cord about a child's neck and walk away with it. If the child wishes to be led, he opens his arms and with glad voice follows the one who holds the cord. If the child does not wish to follow, he does the natural thing of crying out and pulling against the cord until it snaps. "Except ye become as little children," was what the Master said. We have promised not to be led by what is wrong and sinful, and when the temptation comes it is our business to cry aloud to God for help, and to pull back from the attractive temptation until we have snapped its leading strings.

The second question in the baptismal service is, "Dost thou believe all the articles of the Christian faith as contained in the apostles' Creed?" and the answer, "I do."

I do what? Understand the Creed? Oh,

no. The Creed is a statement of God's revealed truth. No man can understand it in this world or explain it. The question is, Dost thou believe, and the test of belief is action, not the understanding. I do believe the Creed in such a way that I will direct my life by its statements. The Creed states that there is a God, and I will live as though I believed that statement.

The third question in the baptismal service is, "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" and the answer, "That is my desire." This question and answer have a very practical meaning. They clearly define and give pointed limitation both to our belief and our practice. We are baptized in a distinct faith, and by the statement of that faith we may at any time test what is required of us to believe. Whatever question is raised, we have but to refer to the Creed, and only that which is contained in the Creed are we bound to accept as an article of faith. What is not found therein we need not accept as an article of faith, necessary to salvation.

Moreover this question and answer give a clear rebuke to that expression which has become so common in our day,—"I do not think so," and therefore I am not going to do this or that. We are not baptized in the faith of

what we may or may not think. Our thoughts may be very untutored, and not at all suited to determine a question of Christian faith. When doubt arises regarding a matter of belief, it is our business to be guided not by what we or somebody else may think, but by what is contained in the Apostles' Creed, for in that faith we were baptized.

The last question and answer of the baptismal service are, "Wilt thou, then, obediently keep God's holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?" "I will, by God's help."

Two words are here emphasized; "Keep," and "Walk." When the Church requires us to promise that we will keep God's Commandments, she cannot mean that we are to observe without breach the moral law of Judaism; for that no man can do. If that could be done, we would be saved by our works. Such was the answer of the Master to the lawyer who asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" "Thou knowest the law; How readest thou? This do and thou shalt live."

Not even the letter of the law could be kept in this sense, much less the spirit as set forth in the sermon on the mount. The moral law is the control of our Father's house and therefore must be the guide of our life; but to

keep that law, without breaking one of the Commandments, is beyond the power of man. There is another sense in which we are to keep God's Commandments, and to this, we think, special reference is had in the question now under consideration.

In the parable of the sower, the Master defines the word "keep." "They on the good ground are they who having heard the word, keep it." He had instanced the by-path, that was hard on the surface and therefore would not receive the seed; then the stony ground, that was hard underneath and would not permit the roots to sink; then the thorns, that prevented the perfecting of the fruit; and lastly, He mentions the good ground, that "keeps" the seed.

It is well to bear in mind that the ground does not make the seed grow. The law of growth is in the seed; the seed *must* grow; the seed cannot help growing when the conditions of growth surround it. The province of the ground is to "keep" the seed; to hold it that it may grow, and after its growth is started not to interfere with its growth, but rather to inclose and protect it, that the seed may develop by feeding on its surroundings.

So do we promise to keep God's Commandments. We must first make ready by en-

deavoring to rid ourselves of wrong living in order that the soil of our hearts may receive the seed; and then in an honest and good heart to hear the word; then to hold and meditate on what we have heard. So to keep God's holy will and Commandments that they may live in us, as well as we live by them.

The second part of the question carries the thought a step further;—"And walk in the same all the days of thy life." To walk is not to fly or to leap. Not a sudden and immediate reaching unto and attaining perfection; but a gradual advancement and a steady progress, however slow its movement. The direction being chosen and the point aimed at determined, to walk is step by step to draw nearer the end. It is not to take one step forward and six steps backward, as though we moved heavenward on Sunday and some-other-ward during the week days, but to continue forward step by step.

To walk in God's ways has little to do with the length of the steps; it has much to do with the fixedness of the direction. In other words we must be guided by St. Paul's injunction: "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all unto the Lord."

Another thought in this connection we lose by letting slip the figure. Walking is a proc-

ess of catching and snatching the body from a fall. In the act of walking, the body is thrown forward and would measure its length in ungraceful haste upon the ground were not the feet, first one and then the other, thrown forward to catch and support the toppling frame. Thus we walk over road and field, and thus we walk towards the crown of life, for spiritual progress is walking too; a stumbling; a catching; an attainment of advancement that, save for the effort made, would be a downfall and a ruin. How singularly accurate is St. Paul's description of this very process: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." As though he too were conscious of making haste slowly. Thus do the words "keep" and "walk" find their meaning to be the same in their Christian and their ordinary application.

These are the vows which we make when we are baptized, and these are the vows which we renew when we are confirmed.

It is to be noted that to each question the answer is made, "I will, by God's help." The strength is not ours, nor does the church permit us to lose sight of the fact that our sufficiency is of God. It is man's part to make a

start; to try; to endeavor; to put forth his own effort. God has promised that we shall not fail if only we be faithful unto death.

As a child of my earthly father, on ratifying or *confirming* the obligations of my natural birth, I inherit all that belongs to my earthly father's name and family:

As a child of my heavenly Father, on ratifying or *confirming* the obligations of my spiritual birth, I inherit all that belongs to my heavenly Father's Name and Family.

Now let each one for himself make answer: Why should I hesitate to be confirmed? What possible excuse can I make either to God, to my fellow man or to myself for the neglect of a duty that is so plain; a life that is so natural; an obligation that is so pressing? If the vow has already been made in baptism and therefore rests on me now, why should I not make the effort to meet the obligation as best I can and discharge the duty? We can find one and only one rational answer to that question. To neglect does not avoid the obligation; to decline does not rid us of the responsibility. A duty neglected remains a neglected duty.

We are, through our baptism, "members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." Our manner of liv-

ing must determine the kind of members and the kind of children we are, as the manner of our living will determine whether we are to inherit the blessing, or at the last be disinherited and cast out from the home that has been prepared for us.

Confirmation is the beginning of the conscious effort to do our duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us; Confirmation is our confession of Christ before men, on the one hand, and on the other is the answer to the prayer: "Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace that he may continue Thine forever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come to Thy everlasting kingdom."

Preparation for confirmation is the conscious determination: "As for me, I will serve the Lord."

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind ;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am : Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve ;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down ;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.

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